



Erythronium

The Newsletter of the Iowa Native Plant Society

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Iowa Native Plant Community Policy Wins National Award

In 1926, ISU Professor Louis Pammel recommended using roadside vegetation as “bee pasturage,” thus advocating for the native prairie plants that then remained in relative abundance along Iowa’s roadsides¹. Today, native prairie remnants (as well as woodland and wetland remnants) still remain along our roadsides, wherever they have escaped the plow and cow. These “roadside nature refuges,” which are now quite rare, are in need of protection and restoration — just as they were in Pammel’s time.

In 2007, the Board of Supervisors in Johnson County adopted a “Native Plant Community Policy.” East-central Iowa’s Johnson County thus became the first of Iowa’s governmental bodies to officially proclaim that native remnants along county roads are to be preserved and restored whenever possible, as long as such preservation does not unavoidably interfere with road creation and maintenance.

This policy was the product of Johnson County’s IRVM (Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management) Committee, which worked for three years to craft a statement that would maximally protect the highest quality native remnants and yet be acceptable for normal engineering and road maintenance procedures. The IRVM Committee is composed of members (mostly public citizens) with diverse interests and experiences, who represent a cross-section of community interests. The policy extends maximum protection to the ten highest-quality remnants, which were selected following three summers of roadside plant inventories (funded by grants from the Living Roadway Trust Fund and Iowa Science Foundation). This protection consists of the county working with landowners, utilities, road engineers, and others to minimize disturbance to the greatest degree possible, while focusing careful restoration techniques (prescribed burns, hand-cutting of invaders, careful spot spraying, etc.) on enhancing the remnants’ native traits. Other roadside remnants identified in the inventories, but not included in the “top ten,” will receive preference in restoration management by Johnson County Roadside Manager Chris Henze.

In 2007, the Johnson County Secondary Road Department received the American Public Works Association’s top national award for “the development and implementation of a creative idea, device, process or system that enhances the goals of public works in serving the public and protecting the environment.” The County Engineer traveled to Texas to attend the acceptance ceremony. This award commends Iowa’s many innovative approaches for retaining biologically diverse roadsides, as well as Johnson County’s efforts.

Hopefully, the Native Plant Community Policy will serve as a model for other Iowa counties in their efforts to manage and protect native roadside plant communities. The entire policy is posted on the Johnson County – Secondary Roads Department

web site (<http://www.johnson-county.com/secondaryroads/index.shtml>). Further details are also available from Chris Henze (319-356-6046; chenze@co.johnson.ia.us).

(Submitted by Connie Mutel, former Johnson County IRVM committee member)

¹ Pammel, L. 1926. “Our Highways and Railway Right-of ways for Bee Pasturage.” *Report of the Iowa State Horticultural Society* 61: 305-310.

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Leaves from the President's Notebook

Going negative

When I entered college, becoming a botanist was certainly not my intent. Nevertheless, as the son of a high school biology teacher and the beneficiary of numerous cross-country summer camping trips, I was attracted to biology. Specializing in plants began while taking Field Botany during the fall of my sophomore year. What I liked most was getting outside and having the means to identify elements of my surroundings. Plausibly, a different field course (or, conversely, one in plant morphology) could have led me to a different career. Nevertheless, my subsequent professional and personal botanical interests have not departed from my field-based roots.

On the other hand, today's average American might recognize at least 1000 corporate logos, yet fewer than 10 local native plants or animals. Nature-deficit disorder as defined by San Diego Union-Tribune columnist Richard Louv is a real threat.¹ Oliver Pergams and Patricia Zaradic, who attributed a decline in US National Park visitation to videophilia and a shift toward indoor activities, have recently elaborated on a "fundamental and pervasive shift away from nature-based recreation"².

Conventional wisdom suggests that declining numbers of people directly experiencing nature will result in fewer voices defending it. The Iowa Native Plant Society and other similar organizations must and will face this challenge. Among the Society's frontline activities will continue to be its field trips and workshops. At our core we know the necessity of a sense of place forged with personal encounters with native flora and their natural habitats.

Distractions are not unique to our age. In the 1840s, those of Concord, Massachusetts compelled Thoreau to briefly live in the woods on Walden Pond and willingly risk being changed as a result of this encounter with nature. Thoreau's account of his vision quest inspired subsequent generations.

We will see a resurgence of interest in the natural world. Keeping things natural until that happens is another matter. When I was in graduate school, my fellow field biologists bemoaned the ascendancy of molecular biology at the expense of organismal studies. Will molecules be superseded by electrons?

Brian T. Hazlett

¹ Louv, R. 2005. Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder. Algonquin Books, Chapel Hill, NC.

² See Pergams, O.R. W. and P. A. Zaradic. 2006. Is love of nature in the US becoming love of electronic media? Journal of Environmental Management 80: 387-393.

Pergams, O.R. W. and P. A. Zaradic. 2008. Evidence for a fundamental and pervasive shift away from nature-based recreation. Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci. USA. 10.1073.

Both papers available at videophilia.org.

Created especially for the Iowa Native Plant Society

Wildflower Note Cards

A four-card set of photo illustrations by Linda and Robert Scarth ready for your handwritten greeting or note. (Card size 4.9" x 6.8")

Cost per set (includes shipping): INPS members, \$6.50*
Non-members: \$7.50 *INPS members may receive their first set free, when ordered with at least one additional set!!

View the cards on the INPS website:
www.public.iastate.edu/~herbarium/inps/docs/inpscards-1.pdf

Send card requests or inquiries to:
Dianne Blankenship, 737 Buckwalter Drive, Sioux City, IA, 51108-9506 bennaid@hotmail.com

Funds from card sales will support INPS efforts to promote conservation, education, and appreciation of Iowa's native plants including a small grants program for preservation, restoration, education, and research concerning native plant communities.

INPS Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers Poster

An 18X24-inch color poster produced by Carl Kurtz. INPS members receive a single poster free. Get them at INPS events or through the mail (see below). Additional posters, \$3 each or two for \$5. Non-members, posters are \$6 each or two for \$10, plus mailing costs.

Mailing instructions: Send mailing address and \$4 postage/handling fee for up to four posters to:
Connie Mutel, 2345 Sugar Bottom Rd, Solon IA, 52333.
Questions? Email connie-mutel@uiowa.edu .

WEBSITES OF INTEREST:

Looking for a way to identify native plant seedlings? **Central Region Seedling ID Guide for Native Prairie Plants**, available at - <http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/plantid/herbaceous/CentralSeedlingID.html>

The Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) announces the launch of **Invasive Plant Science and Management (IPSM)**. This peer-reviewed, quarterly journal will focus on fundamental and applied research about invasive plant biology, ecology, management, restoration of invaded non-crop areas, and educational, sociopolitical, and technical aspects of invasive plant management. See the link for article describing new publication: www.dairyherd.com/directories.asp?pgID=675&ed_id=7160

The Weed Science Society of America site: wssa.allenpress.com/perlserv/?request=get-toc&issn=1939-747X&ct=1

The Emerald Horizon The History of Nature in Iowa By Cornelia Mutel

This landmark work is a comprehensive natural history of Iowa. Ecologist and historian Connie Mutel has written this both lyrical and scientific account of the past and present condition of Iowa's environment. She offers hope and suggestions for restoring Iowa's fragmented landscape and reconnecting with the natural world.

"It's really about how our native plants and landscape integrity were lost and what we can do to regain and nurture these valuable natural elements."

Connie Mutel

Connie Mutel, a board member and active supporter of the INPS, prefers that profits from her book feed into the restoration of nature in Iowa to the greatest extent possible. Consistent with the book's theme is our small grants program supporting native plant community preservation, restoration, and research. Therefore, the Society will direct its book proceeds to support this program and other INPS efforts promoting education about Iowa's native plants. Books offered through the INPS are autographed by the author.

To order your signed copy: Make out your check to INPS (\$27.50 + \$1.50 shipping) and mail it to:

Dianne Blankenship
737 Buckwalter Drive
Sioux City, IA 51108

2007 Olav Smedal Conservation Award

Jimmie Thompson of Ames, an INPS charter member, was the 2007 recipient of the Olav Smedal Conservation Award on January 4th. You might recall that Jo Hudson wrote an article for the INPS Newsletter describing Jimmie as a "super-volunteer". That volunteer spirit and his accomplishments while studying the central Iowa flora, as well as his contributions of Native American archaeological site information to the Office of the State Archaeologist, combined to make him a worthy recipient of the award.

The award was established by the Ames Tribune in honor of its long-time outdoor writer and editor, Olav Smedal and is presented annually by the Ames Chapter of the Izaak Walton League and the Story County Conservation Board to a person who has demonstrated the highest standards in conservation and outdoor pursuits. An article outlining Jimmie's accomplishments was published in the Ames Tribune: www.midiowanews.com/site/tab1.cfm?newsid=19233139&BRD=2700&PAG=461&dept_id=554329&rfti=6

The Iowa Native Plant Society's 2008 Field Trips

Compiled by Mark J. Leoschke

Thanks to all our field trip leaders! 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 Department of Transportation's state highway maps are available at DOT rest stops and welcome centers. Larger state preserves are represented by small blue dots with the name of the preserve in blue letters. For instance, Hayden Prairie State Preserve in Howard County is located southwest of Chester.

The Iowa Sportman's Atlas has county maps with wildlife management areas, state and county parks, state preserves, national wildlife refuges, etc. owned by public and some private conservation organizations. Its current edition (2006) has 911 street names for most, if not all, counties. Street names make it much easier to locate a favorite natural area or find a new one. If you are interested in purchasing a copy of the atlas, check with your local bookstore; sporting goods store; call 1-800-568-8334 or www.sportsmanatlas.com. The cost is \$21.95.

May 3th 8:00 to 12:00, 1:00 to 5:00. Allamakee County - Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation Ryan Area, Meet at the site at 7:30 AM.

This field trip will provide participants the opportunity to assist the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, a nonprofit conservation group, in a plant inventory of the Ryan Area, a tract of 1,224 acres in western Allamakee County. The Foundation purchased the land in February of 2007 and needs information on the plant communities to help guide their management. The site is an example of a fairly pristine landscape in the Paleozoic Plateau and is characterized by several miles of the Upper Iowa River, hillside prairies, limestone bluffs, and large tracts of mature oak-hickory forests. To allow ample time for participants to see the varied communities and compile plant lists, two field excursions are planned: one for the morning and one during the afternoon.

Directions: Register for this field trip with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (515-288-1846). Ask for Marlene Ehresman or Brian Fankhauser. Camping at a private campground nearby may be available (check with the Foundation).

May 10th Linn County (east-central Iowa)

The J. Harold Ennis Preserve is 33 acres of mostly deciduous upland and lowland forest on rolling hills next to the Cedar River. There's a nice trail that meanders around the perimeter of the site (the trail, however, is not suitable for handicapped individuals). The preserve has shooting stars, columbines, violets, spring beauties, sweet william, dutchman's breeches, bloodroot, anemones, buttercup, jack-in-the-pulpit, pussytoes, may apples, geraniums and ragwort. Our leader will be Frank Olsen, lepidopterist and naturalist.

Directions: From Cedar Rapids proceed east on U.S. Highway 30. Go past the exit for Highway 13 and in about a mile pass the entrance (on the right) to Palisades-Kepler State Park. About a half mile later you'll see some county maintenance buildings on the right— turn right (south) just past there onto Cedar River Road (paved). Go a bit more than a mile and turn right into the parking lot for the Preserve. There is a parking lot that accommodates about 20 cars.

June 7th Floyd County (north-central Iowa)

Little Cedar Wildlife Area is a 160 acre Floyd County Conservation Board site that includes a rich fen with a number of native plants. Some of the highlight species seen at this time of year include the state special concern species cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) and sage willow (*Salix candida*). The fen is also home to a large population of the state threatened Baltimore checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas phaeton*). This wily and beautiful black, orange and white checkered insect's first year larvae feed on white turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*) found in the fen. The ground will be somewhat uneven to walk on, but a slow pace increases the chance of finding something interesting. Mark J. Leoschke, botanist for the Wildlife Bureau of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will be our guide. Fens are wetlands, **SO BRING BOOTS!!!!!!**

Directions: From the intersection of County Road T66 and U.S. Highway 18 (east of Charles City) drive 3 miles east (past the Charles City Municipal Airport) to Windfall (a gravel road— the Sportman's Atlas does not specify if it is a street or avenue). Turn left (north) on Windfall and drive one mile. At the intersection of 190th and Windfall turn right (east) on 190th and drive about 0.5 mile. Park along the gravel road. We will walk north from here to the fen.

This site is found in T96N R15W Section 36 SW4 (note that the location in the Sportman's Atlas is wrong— it shows Little Cedar as located in the SE4 of Section 35).

July 5th 10:00 to 2:00 (bring a sack lunch)

Ray Prairie is a very nice wet mesic prairie that is home to several uncommon plants, including *Amorpha nana* (fragrant false indigo), *Valeriana edulis* (valerian), *Platanthera praeclara* (western prairie fringed orchid) and *Cypripedium candidum* (small white lady's-slipper orchid). Other typical plants among the 300 species that occur here include *Dodecatheon meadia*, *Eryngium yuccifolium*, *Pycnanthemum virginianum*, *Zizia aurea*, *Lilium michiganense*, and *Silphium lacinatedum*.

The Drake University Prairie Rescue program has worked on the site several times over the last two years, doing woody removal and prescribed burning. Tom Rosburg (Drake University) will be leading the field trip.

Directions: Meet at the Kwik Star gas station in Shell Rock located along Highway 3 at 9:30 AM.

Annual Meeting

Watch for information about the Annual Meeting and additional field trips in the next newsletter, listserv and the website.

UPCOMING EVENTS:**Mar 29 (Sat) 10 a.m. Burn School. M/\$10 NM/\$15**

Participants will learn about the history and role of fire in prairie, how to set goals and develop burn plans, safe techniques for prescribed fires, fire equipment, and how to conduct a prairie burn. Wear old, natural-fiber clothes. Bring leather gloves, a water bottle, and a sack lunch. Finish at 4 PM Rain date: April 6. Indian Creek Nature Center, 6665 Otis Road SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403, Phone (319)362-0664 www.indiancreeknaturecenter.org

Mar 30 (Sun) 2 p.m. at Indian Creek Nature Center In Search of the Elusive Skunk Cabbage. M\$3/NM\$5 (see Mar 29) Enjoy a trek up Bena Brook's valley to look for one of the earliest and wildflowers.

April 5 (Sat) 15th Annual Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Spring Symposium, ISU, 1414 Molecular Biology Bdg. - Dr. David Wake, Professor of Integrative Biology and Curator of Herpetology at the University of California-Berkeley will be the keynote speaker for the 15th Annual Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Spring Symposium at Iowa State University. The title of Wake's talk is "Are we in the Midst of a Mass Extinction? A View from the World of Amphibians" and should be of broad interest to researchers, students, citizen scientists, conservation organizations and the public. The symposium starts with the keynote at 9:00 and continues with student and faculty presentations throughout the day until 4:00 pm in room 1414 Molecular Biology Building on the Iowa State University campus. It is free and open to the public and includes lunch, a poster session and a silent auction.

Apr 14 (Mon) 7:30 p.m. Conservation Efforts and Research for Giant Pandas in China. (free) Dr. Gary Machlis, Canon Professor of Conservation at the University of Idaho, worked in

China in 1981 and again in 1986-7 on the Giant Panda Project for the World Wildlife Fund. Program will be held in Flaherty Community Room, Basile Hall, Mt. Mercy College.

April 24 (Thru) 9AM-2PM The Tallgrass Prairie Center will offer an all new Prairie Seedling ID workshop. Cost is \$50, includes registration and catered lunch, "Prairie Seedlings Illustrated, Vol. 1", the new "Native Seed Production Manual", a CD-Rom of seedling images and identification characteristics, and native seedlings to take home. Anyone interested in learning to identify native seedlings will benefit from this workshop. For more information, or to reserve one of 30 slots before April 11th, contact: Ryan Welch, email: rwelch@uni.edu, phone 319-273-3828, fax: 319-268-0668.

Apr 26 (Sat) 8 a.m. - 3 a.m. 15th Indian Creek Nature Center Annual Women's Walking Workshop: (M/\$35 NM \$40 Registration Required) Walking Gently on Our Earth. Call 319-362-0664 for brochure to be mailed or go to www.indiancreeknaturecenter.org to download a copy.

May 3 (Sat) 9 a.m. to noon Indian Creek Nature Center Guild Annual Spring Plant Sale. (free) (see Mar.29) has been hard at work to bring you another fantastic plant sale.

May 10 - 11 (Sat/Sun) 14th Annual Wings and Wetlands Festival Welcome the coming of spring, celebrate National Wetland Month, and explore the unique prairie pothole region of Northwest Iowa. This festival is coordinated over a six county region in Northwest Iowa (Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Kossuth, O'Brien and Palo Alto) and offers a wide selection of programs and activities for people of all ages and interests. Events held throughout the region include bird hikes, kayaking and canoeing adventures, Trumpeter Swan releases, and youth programs. There is also food and entertainment at some locations. Join us for one or more of the programs being offered throughout the weekend. For more information, call the Prairie Heritage Center (712-295-7200) or the Lost Island Prairie Wetland Nature Center (712-837-4866).

May 17: Native Plant Sale, Des Moines farmer's market. More info: Inger Lamb, ingerlamb3@mchsi.com or 515.250.1693

June 7: Missouri River Relief Cleanup, more info TBA: <http://www.riverrelief.org/> or <http://www.iwla.org/index.php?id=504>

June 14 - 21: Project AWARE canoe trip, Mason City to Cedar Falls, more info: www.iowaprojectaware.com

June 27 and 28, 2008 Sedge Identification Workshop Grinnell College Conard Environmental Research Area (CERA) Would you like to learn more about sedges than just their edges? This workshop will provide two full days of field and lab instruction by Iowa sedge experts Dr. Bill Norris, Dr. Tom Rosburg, and Scott Zager. Registration information will be available soon. Please contact Larissa Mottl at mottll@grinnell.edu or 641-269-4717 for questions about the workshop and to receive registration information. The workshop is being sponsored by the Grinnell College Center for Prairie Studies, Iowa Valley RC&D, IPN, and the INPS.

Mark your calendars for the **August 4-8: 2008 North American Prairie Conference**, "The Prairie Meets the River", Winona State University, Winona MN, more info: <http://bio.winona.edu/NAPC/>

May 30, 31, June 1 (Fri-Sun) 32nd Annual Loess Hills Prairie Seminar – Nature in Iowa

For those interested in native plants, the Loess Hills Prairie Seminar creates just about a perfect weekend! Imagine choosing from over ten field sessions on plants (prairie, woodland, bryophyte, sedge), and there are speakers, too! But it is also a perfect weekend for those who also have an interest in birds (several sessions), photography, butterflies, cultural history, archaeology, geology, fossils, environmental writing, story telling, water quality and testing, conservation programs, management, deer overpopulation, the skills of early humans in the Hills, bush craft skills, archery, going on a guided walk for all ages, the history of boats and taking a boat ride, connecting children with nature, or how to lead a successful field trip.

The seminar begins on the evening of May 30, 2008, with speakers for the adults and the Science Center of Iowa programs for children, at West Monona High School, 1314 15th St., Onawa, IA. Field sessions (hikes, walks, at camp, or auto tours) span the day on Saturday all beginning at the Loess Hills Wildlife Management Area at 178th St. and Oak Ave., Castana, IA. Speakers and children's programs followed by family entertainment on Saturday evening are again at the West Monona High School. Field sessions on Sunday morning will end with the release of a raptor by SOAR. At noon you can head back home, completely refreshed and renewed, ready to embrace what summer has to offer.

Four INPS board members are actively involved with this seminar: Connie Mutel will speak about The Emerald Horizon, and Deb Lewis and Brian Hazlett will each lead a field session. Dianne Blankenship is the coordinator of the seminar. For more information: bennaid@hotmail.com – or contact Gloria Kistner at NWAEA – 800-352-9040, Ext. 6080 - gkistner@nwaea.k12.ia.us

The preliminary program and registration form should be on the NWAEA website in April: www.nwaea.k12.ia.us/en/upcoming_events/loess_hills_seminar/

Plants for Children's Play

Everyone who follows the INPS Listserv remembers the flurry of responses following Jean Eells' request for information about the plants we played with in childhood. Jean will lead a session at the Loess Hills Prairie Seminar entitled *Plants for Children's Play*. About this session she states, "What plants did you play with as a child? Session will be a free-ranging discussion about plants used by children for play and our adult orientation to landscapes and plants. We plan to hike the loop through the wildlife area where we can pick, break, twist, pull apart, taste, and otherwise play with plants.

In Memoriam

Janet K. Christensen, 67, of Davenport passed away on May 9, 2007. Janet was born in Anamosa and graduated from the University of Iowa. Her passion for flowers and wildflowers of the prairie and woodland was unparalleled. She became a Master Gardener in 1990 and was a dedicated volunteer at the Scott County Extension Office. A member of the Iowa Native Plant Society, she taught adult education classes to the community on landscaping with native plants and landscaping for wildlife, passing on her love of these special plants to her students. Janet was also an active volunteer with her church and the Boy Scouts.

BOOK REVIEWS

MUSHROOMS AND OTHER FUNGI OF THE MIDCONTINENTAL UNITED STATES - SECOND EDITION

By D. M. Huffman, L. H. Tiffany, G. Knaphus, and R. A. Healy
Bur Oak Guides; 384 pages, 300 color photos, 21 drawings, 5 3/4 x 8 1/2 inches, \$39.95 paper, available March 2008, 1-58729-627-6, 978-1-58729-627-7 <http://www.uipress.uiowa.edu/books/2008-spring/huffmansecond.htm>

This completely revised second edition provides all the information necessary to identify mushrooms in the field in the midcontinental region of Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska, Missouri, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin: the tallgrass prairies and the western parts of the eastern deciduous forests. The authors have updated scientific names, added photos where there were none and replaced poor photos with better ones, improved the keys, added some species and deleted others, added a section on truffles, and annotated the bibliography. There were originally 224 species; now there are 248. Some of the new photos-125 in all-serve as a second photo for a species, where it is helpful to show details that cannot be viewed in a single photo.

Donald Huffman, emeritus professor of biology at Central College in Pella, Iowa, has studied fungi in the U.S. and China since 1957 and more recently in Northern Europe and China. Lois Tiffany is emeritus distinguished professor of botany at Iowa State University; she has studied fungi in the U.S. since 1952. George Knaphus was a professor of botany and plant pathology at Iowa State University at the time of his death in 2000. Rosanne Healy is a mycologist working on grant-funded research projects; she has studied fungi in Iowa since 1996.

GRASSES OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

For those who find grasses challenging to identify, yet so appealing as to study them, the second volume has arrived to replace Hitchcock's *Manual of Grasses* that has served us well for 75 years. It is Volume 24 of *Flora of North America*, Magnoliophyta: Commelinidae (in part): Poaceae, part 1. It describes grasses of North America north of Mexico with exquisite line drawings, distribution maps, ecological characteristics, and keys to identification. It is 8 3/4 X 11 1/2 inches and 911 pages. It's a tome as my students used to say.

The book has been assembled by The Grass Phylogeny Group of the Flora North America Project. Volume 24 covers the BEP clade (Bambusoideae, Ehrhartioideae, and Pooideae) containing familiar genera including *Bambusa*, *Oryza*, *Melica*, *Stipa*, *Bromus*, *Elymus*, *Poa*, *Agrostis*, *Avena*, and many others.

Volume 25 was published first so that the key and table of contents in this Volume could correctly refer to its page locations. If you haven't kept up with grass taxonomy in a while, be prepared for some unfamiliar names: *Nasella* for some of the *Stipas*, *Amelichloa* for other *Stipas*, *Achnatherum* for some of the others, *Leymus*, *Pascopyrum*, *Pseudoroegneria*, for wildryes and wheatgrasses, and many more.

Volume 24 is dedicated to "the two giants on whose shoulders we stand, Albert Spear Hitchcock and Mary Agnes Chase". Volume 24 is published by Oxford University Press, Inc., 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY, 10016. I have also found it on Shop.com on the web for \$ 95.00.

Abundant Iowa City by Fred Meyer

Change is coming. I can feel it in our climate, political system, and communities. This sense of change began strongly resonating in me four years ago when the criticality of several worldwide crises became apparent. Since that time I have been working to understand how to best prepare for the changes that will be created by these crises. From this research came *Abundant Iowa City*: An effort to define, understand, and implement local solutions to help solve the worldwide crises already underway.

Our country has hundreds of environmental and social problems that must be addressed. The problems have not been solved partly because focus is placed on each one in isolation even though the majority of the problems are interconnected. A holistic approach is required to find lasting solutions. This approach can be framed by the three greatest crises in the history of our civilization: climate change, Peak Oil, and depletion of natural resources.

Solutions

Despite their enormity, climate change, Peak Oil, and the depletion of natural resources are all just symptoms of an underlying problem. Once the underlying problem is addressed, the symptoms begin to disappear. This underlying problem is the human need for safety, security, and personal fulfillment. If these needs are not met, history shows that we will do anything to acquire them—including destroying our world.

The corporate culture has twisted these needs and capitalized on them by driving into our heads that the success of an individual matters more than anything else. This hyper-individualism blatantly goes against the cooperative processes found in nature and the destructive outcome of this approach can no longer be ignored.

A cooperative, ethical, and regenerative world is required to solve our crises. This “profound” thought occurred to me after the joy I felt from making lifestyle changes that both drastically lowered my environmental impact and raised my contribution to the community. For example, over the past three years I have volunteered in many community organizations, biked just about everywhere, set a limit on my auto mileage, and bought almost nothing except food that I could not grow in my backyard.

Changing Our Lifestyle

Changing my lifestyle so my presence on Earth actually benefits the environment is the first of two high-level solutions. At first it seemed that changing my lifestyle would have little impact on the enormous problems facing us. But as I traipsed down this path of fulfillment and connection, I realized with increased clarity that no better solution exists. Not only am I increasing

the abundance of resources and friendships around me, but I am also helping to change the belief system of the culture. The culture is nothing more than the thoughts of those who are a part of it. I begin to change the culture when I replace my thoughts of consumption, individualism, exploitation, and competition with thoughts of creation, contribution, sharing, and cooperation. This shift in thought (and culture) can only begin with me—it cannot be imposed by some higher authority.

Local Economy

Shifting our national and global growth-centered economic system to one that is more local and cyclical is the second high-level solution. When residents foster a sharing and regenerative mindset, this begins to re-create the self-reliant Iowa towns that once existed prior to the ubiquity of cheap oil. Rather than depend upon the fragile, energy-intensive, globalized system of food, water, energy, and materials, we must create as many of these resources as possible within the Iowa City area. A localized economy helps create an infrastructure where every resident can find safety, security, and personal fulfillment.

Abundant Iowa City

Abundant Iowa City is a newly organized effort to encapsulate these solutions and move them forward. We are by no means alone. Dozens of towns in England are following the “Transition Towns” model to cope with the crises. In the U.S., city-wide sustainability initiatives are popping up everywhere.

I believe Iowa City is already looking in this direction and has a huge potential to quickly become more resilient and regenerative—we simply need to make the effort explicit and rally around it. The creation of the Pedestrian Mall shows that we are not afraid to change our car-centered infrastructure, the city recently signed the Sierra Club Cool Cities pledge, and the actions of dozens of progressive environmental and social justice organizations already work toward sustainability.

Change is coming. We can do nothing and let events unfold in a series of painful, lurching emergencies, or we can collectively plan and design our way through this by unleashing the intelligence, ingenuity, and creativity in our community. We are not just transforming a community, we are transforming ourselves.

For more information please contact me or visit the temporary web site at: <http://groups.google.com/group/abundant-iowa-city>.

Fred Meyer is a Permaculture Designer and lives in Iowa City. He is the Backyard Abundance Campaign Director and serves on the Environmental Advocates Board of Directors and the Johnson County Master Gardener Steering Committee. Contact him at fred.meyer@BackyardAbundance.org or 319-358-7665.

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Iowa Native Plant Society

c/o Deb Lewis

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