



Erythronium

Newsletter of the Iowa Native Plant Society vol. 24 no. 1 - April 2018

Peculiar persimmons and another out-of-place plant at Howell Station, Lake Red Rock, by Stephen Johnson

The south end of Lake Red Rock, just below the dam, has several naturalistic areas with forest and in some places interesting floral diversity. The paved hiking and bicycle trail from North Overlook, an upland forest, to Howell Station, a lower elevation overlooking the Des Moines River, is not particularly diverse but it was until recently a scenic walk with eastern meadowlarks nesting in the broad grassy meadows and calling warbling vireos in the trees lining the south rim of a wetland separating Howell Station from North Tailwater. While the area is not floristically diverse, it can occasionally offer up a few botanical surprises.

I noticed the first such floral botanical oddity in the late summer of 2006. While walking by the warbling vireo trees to my right, I noticed ripening orange persimmons to my left.

That was not all. At the extreme western extent of the persimmon patch stood a taller tree bearing larger purple fruits, making it appear as a persimmon tree loaded with purple plums. This tree and another not bearing fruit, hence probably a male, were both taller than the other typical persimmons. Not only were the purple fruits larger but so also were the leaves. These larger leaves remained green through early autumn and by October were still green, while those of the “normal” persimmons began to take on an amber and golden glow of senescence.



Later after several frosts, the purple persimmon retained its leaves and even lost small branches due to wind drag on those leaves. The leaves of the purple persimmon only fell, still green, after a third and harder frost in later October. It struck me that the tree had decidedly southern characteristics of not responding appropriately to northern climactic conditions as did the typical orange-fruited persimmons.



I placed a note on Ecolog, the ecology listserv and also communicated with Tom Jurik, an ecologist at Iowa State University. Tom was interested in the persimmon and so I sent him a few fruits which he gave to Don Farrar, now a retired botanist from Iowa State. Tom wrote to me from my description, the trees had possible southern affinity and that Don had never seen persimmons like these before, and Don wrote to me that this purple fruited persimmon as well as the normal ones were likely at the northwest limit for the species.

Meanwhile I'd received a reply to my Ecolog posting from a Michigan fruit tree grower, John Raymond, who really wanted to see these fruits for himself. I sent him a box with several and he told me they looked like “gigantic blueberries.”

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Leaves of the President's Notebook



Seasons are changing, winter into spring. Seems to be taking it's time, but then every year is different. Checking off certain signs I watch for like some of the first birds to return in the spring, some of the first blooms of spring, and the first ground squirrel to emerge, and hearing the first frogs. Soon all will be accounted for and summer will be here.

There will be some changes this summer; I will no longer be doing the Doolittle prairie walks. I will miss it. I enjoyed getting out and seeing how things have changed from year to year, but it is time for me to end doing it. Tom Rosburg will continue them.

Just saw a turkey vulture overhead and noticed mole activity in the yard, a couple more spring events! Haven't heard of many flowers being reported, but some of the plants are up. My maple tree has not bloomed out, although the flowers are ready to pop one of these days!

Field trips are being planned for the summer, be sure to take in the ones you can! They are great for seeing new areas but also for getting to know other members better. The ones led by Mark Leoschke are great opportunities to learn from Mark, and he has a lot of information to share!

Paying tribute to someone who got me interested in prairie, Roger Landers was my first mentor for prairies. I was vaguely aware of them before, but he really helped open my eyes! I went on some field excursions with him which gave me time to interact with him and catch his enthusiasm. The field trips also gave me some appreciation for areas of the state I had not seen before.

As Marcel Proust wrote: *"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."*

~ *Lloyd Crim*



Changes in Listserv Management


Our INPS listserv is now being managed by MJ Hatfield, with Casey Kohrt serving as the official representative at the University of Iowa. The University of Iowa Information Technology Services hosts the Iowa-Native-Plants and the Iowa-Insects LISTSERV lists, and Lisa Schintler, Senior IT Support Consultant, has provided technical support for LISTSERV issues for many years.

For assistance with your subscription, contact MJ (mjhatfield@oneota.org), who is handling changes in membership and other matters for both listservs.

The INPS board wishes to express its thanks to Diana Horton for establishing and managing the listserv for many years, and to Lisa for her ongoing support. Thanks also to MJ and Casey for taking over its management. With all of their help, this tool is serving as a major communications link for INPS members and other plant lovers across the Upper Midwest.

Calendar of Upcoming Events and Activities

Iowa Wildflower Month is celebrated in May. The Iowa Wildflower Month events begin in northeast Iowa on May 5, and it continues with INPS field trips in western and central Iowa. There are many additional opportunities during May to get outdoors and enjoy wildflowers and natural areas. See the proclamation signed by Governor Kim Reynolds declaring May as Iowa Wildflower Month on page 9.

INPS is providing many field trip opportunities this season. We hope to see you at some field trips. Many events sponsored by others are also listed, giving you even more opportunities to experience our native plants. Be sure to visit our website calendar for updates and additional offerings, and check with contacts before traveling a distance. All events are free and open to the public without pre-registration unless otherwise noted; however, there can be changes so it might be wise to check first before traveling to an event. CCB stands for County Conservation Board and IPN for Iowa Prairie Network. INPS-sponsored events are marked with  and bold text.

Saturday, April 28 4:00-5:30pm – Biscuitroot Bluff Prairie Walk in Fremont County. This new WMA contains State Endangered Species biscuitroot and two other plants listed as state Special Concern Species.” The site also offers panoramic views of the Loess Hills and Missouri River valley. Biscuitroot Bluff is located about 3.5 miles south of Thurman, Iowa along Bluff Road/County Highway L44 near 242nd Avenue. IPN. lance@goldenhillsrcd.org 712-482-3029

Sunday, April 29 1:00-2:00pm – Wildflower Hike at Thomas Mitchell Park. Meet at the pond parking lot, 4250 NE 108 St., Mitchellville. Hike through the woods to view and identify the dazzling display of spring wildflowers. Sponsored by Polk County Conservation. 515-323-5339

Saturday, May 5 2:00 pm

 **INPS field trip – Plant and Insect Hike at Red Oak Prairie in northeast Iowa**

This hike is scheduled to follow the morning Heritage Valley garlic mustard pull.

Red Oak Prairie is a private hill prairie remnant located north of Harpers Ferry at 1180 Red Oak Road (no 911 marker, but across the road from 1179 Red Oak Road) which is just off the Great River Road.

Depending on spring weather, fringed and hoary puccoon, violet wood sorrel, bird’s foot violet, bastard toadflax, cream wild indigo, columbine, Robin’s-plantain, blue eyed grass, prairie groundsel, wood betony, redroot, and prairie phlox may be in bloom (and garlic mustard). For those who hike to the top of the prairie, woodland wildflowers will be blooming. Sturdy shoes are a must, perhaps also a walking stick, on this somewhat steep prairie.

Parking will be at the edge of Red Oak Road but the road is narrow so please, leave room for other vehicles when you park.

Be sure to bring your binoculars. Attendees might want to observe ducks, geese and birds, as the south portion of Red Oak Road is adjacent to the Mississippi River. We will be looking for insects too. MJ Hatfield will lead the hike. INPS will also sponsor a field trip at this same location on September 15, also led by MJ Hatfield. mjhatfield@oneota.org

Saturday, May 5 8:30am and 1:00pm – Into the Wild and Out with the Mustard at Heritage Valley near Decorah. Garlic mustard pull, join either shift. Sponsored by Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. RSVP required: Brian Fankhauser at 563-382-2008 or bfankhauser@inhf.org

Saturday, May 5 9:00-11:00am – Mushroom Ramble at Wickiup Hill Learning Center, 10260 Morris Hills Rd, Toddville. Sponsored by Prairie State Mushroom Club. Cost: \$2.50/ adult, \$1.00 for children 16 and under or \$5.00 per family. No charge for Mushroom Club members.

Saturday, May 5 10:00am – Spring Nature Walk at Springer Woods in Decatur County. SIOSA members and Decatur County Conservation personnel will lead a walk through the 40-acre woodland to observe wildflowers, birds, insects and other wildlife. 641-446-7307

Tuesday, May 8 6:30-8:30pm – Prairie Walk at Vincent Bluff Preserve, 2200 Thallas St, Council Bluffs. Sponsored by IPN Region 4. lance@goldenhillsrcd.org 712-482-3029

Saturday, May 12 10:00-11:30am

 **INPS field trip – Wildflower Walk at Fowler Forest Preserve in Woodbury County**


Fowler Forest Preserve has many spring ephemerals. Celebrate Iowa Wildflower Month by joining us for a walk through this woodland to view the diversity of spring wildflowers. Wear sturdy walking shoes. Dawn Snyder, Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center's Education Program Director, will lead this walk.

Fowler Forest is located 1/2 mile west of Smithland on Hwy 141. Sponsored by the Iowa Native Plant Society, Woodbury County Conservation, and Loess Hills Wild Ones. 712-258-0838

Friday, May 18 5:30-7:45pm – WOW Walk - Habitats of the middle Raccoon Valley at White-rock Conservancy, 1314 Fig Ave, Coon Rapids.
www.whiterockconservancy.org 712-790-8221

Saturday, May 19 9:00am-12:00pm – Spring Awakening BioBlitz at Cordova Park, 1378 Co Hwy G28, Otley. Meet at the Cordova Park Observation Tower shelter area. Iowa Prairie Network and Dr. Pete Eyheralde will lead groups to learn about wildflowers, reptiles, and amphibians. Co-sponsored by the Marion County Conservation Board and the Red Rock Lake Association and Region 6 IPN. Contact: Marla Mertz 641-627-5935 mrmnat@msn.com

Thursday, May 24 7:00-8:30pm

 **INPS-sponsored Doolittle Prairie Walk**
Doolittle Prairie State Preserve, Story City, is the site of the first in the 2018 series of walks at this prairie. A new leader this year - Tom Rosburg. Additional dates: June 28, July 26, and August 23. The walk format is casual and informational, focusing on questions from participants and identification of both blooming and vegetative plants. This is a good opportunity to view the prairie as it changes during the summer. Insect repellent, long pants, and sturdy shoes are recommended. The site has pot holes so be prepared for some wet spots.

DIRECTIONS: Doolittle Prairie is located north of Ames and south of Story City. From I-35 take Exit 123 (Roland and E18/130th St exit) and go


west on E18 for ~ 1/2 mile until 560th Ave (a gravel road); turn south and go 1 1/2 miles. There is a sign at the preserve entrance on the west side of the road - follow the lane back to the parking lot and prairie. Doolittle Prairie Walks are sponsored by INPS, IPN, and Story County Conservation.

Friday, June 1 evening to Sunday, June 3 noon

 **INPS-sponsored Loess Hills Prairie Seminar**

This annual event has many sponsors. For info: mccbnat@mononacounty.org 712-433-2400

Saturday, June 9 9:30am-3:00pm

 **INPS field trip to Cedar River Crossing (CRC) and Ciha Fen Preserve, both in NE Johnson County**

This June 9th INPS field trip, in addition to providing native plants and excellent birding, will generate discussions of the ecological restoration efforts now being initiated at CRC, as well as the site's rich human history: CRC hosts an 1800s gypsy encampment site, Native American river-fording site, sporadic Catalpas which indicate Native American trading in past centuries, and the 1897 Sutliff Bridge. Nearby Ciha Fen Preserve, with its short-grass prairie, ancient massive oak trees, and uncommon fen, is an ecological treasure with numerous rare plant and animal species.

Any trip to CRC is dependent on the river levels. If the Cedar River is too high, or weather is rainy, most of the property may not be accessible, and the field trip will be cancelled. If in doubt, call the Conservation Board office at 319-645-2315, or email lgullett@co.johnson.ia.us and put INPS tour of CRC in the subject field.

Preregistering for the event by calling the above phone number or sending an email is helpful, but not required. Doing so will help with event planning.

This field trip is sponsored by the Iowa Native Plant Society and Friends of Johnson County Conservation, with significant input from Johnson County Conservation Board staff. Trip leaders include Rick Hollis (FJCC), Connie Mutel (INPS), Larry Gullett (JCCB Director), Dave Wehde (Natural Resource Manager), Jeremy Rieck (Natural Resource Specialist) and Aaron Basten (citizen-scientist). John Larson, Principal Ecologist with Applied Ecological Services will also attend. Larson and AES is guiding

the wetland and savanna restoration efforts.

NOTE: Be sure to prepare for possible ticks, especially at Ciha (where plants may be taller and trails less established). Long pants, closed shoes, and insect spray are recommended.

If available, bring bag chairs in case these are needed for overflow seats during hayrack rides. Carpooling is encouraged.

Schedule:

9:30am: Meet at the CRC shed and board hayracks for a ride through the property to the sand prairie (see route in red on map) where we'll identify a number of unusual native plants; from there we'll hike a half-mile to an upland woods that is undergoing restoration; then return via hayrack to the shed.

11:30-12:45: Lunch at Baxa's Bar and Grill just across the bridge in Sutliff, enjoy a sack lunch at the picnic tables on the bridge, or travel into Solon for lunch.

12:45pm: Drive a few miles to Ciha Fen Preserve for a walk to explore a myriad of native plants and the preserve's rare fen.

Feel free to come to either the morning session, the afternoon session, or both.

More Site Information:

Cedar River Crossing (CRC) is a 467-acre lowland preserve along the Cedar River near Sutliff, IA. The land was recently purchased by the Johnson County Conservation Board with goals of restoring oak woodlands and prairie, and recreating wetlands for a mitigation bank. Since the woodlands and wetlands are in early stages of restoration, native plants (other than trees) may be sparse in these sites, and the emphasis will instead be on what is being done and why. However, visitors may see native beauties in the 14-acre lowland sand prairie, such as Fragrant Sumac, Blue Toadflax, Prairie Larkspur, Venus Looking Glass, Virginia Spiderwort and Fringed Puccoon. Conservation Board staff will also discuss the benefits and uses of ecological restoration, and what we might see here in coming years as the land heals. Plan to revisit CRC in 10 years to see native habitat restoration at its finest. The nearby 80-acre **Ciha Fen Preserve**, which is higher and drier, consists of a sand prairie/savanna/wetland complex blanketing a wind-deposited sand ridge. It contains the Ciha Fen,

which is one of the only two documented remaining nutrient-poor fens known in the state of Iowa, with numerous rare plant and animal species. The site has a short faint trail loop and no restroom facilities.

Directions:

CRC: 5473 Sutliff Road NE, Solon, Iowa 52333
From Highway 1 north of Solon, turn east onto 140th St (also F-14), which becomes Sutliff Rd. Continue from Hwy. 1 a bit over 5.5 miles to where Sutliff Rd. makes a sharp left curve north toward the new Sutliff Bridge over the Cedar River. At that curve, the entrance path into CRC continues straight ahead (east), toward the old Sutliff Bridge. Meet at the small pole building used as the operations center just inside the property.

Ciha Fen Preserve: 5656 145th St. NE, Lisbon, IA 52253

About 1.25 miles SE of Sutliff. From Sutliff, go south on White Oak Ave, then turn east onto 145th St. and proceed to the preserve. Park along 145 St.

Saturday, June 9 5:30am-4:00pm – Big Sand Mound Field Day. Once every three years, Big Sand Mound Preserve is open to the public for one day.

This is an opportunity for you to accompany ecologists, scientists, naturalists on one of Iowa's most unique natural areas. The registration cost will be \$15 (twice the cost in 2015) BUT this year registration will include a laminated, fold-out field guide to Big Sand Mound that participants can keep. Children under 12 are free. There will be several kid friendly sessions. Lunch will NOT be provided. Participants should bring their own sack lunch. Water will be available.

Note: the INPS field trip and the Big Sand Mound Field Trip are in close proximity. Depending on your interest, you could plan to attend both.

Tuesday, June 12 6:30-8:00pm Prairie Walk at Hitchcock Nature Center, 27792 Ski Hill Loop, Honey Creek. Sponsored by IPN Region 4.
lance@goldenhillsrccd.org 712-482-3029

Friday, June 22 2:00pm-Saturday, June 23, 2:00pm – Bioblitz at Nahant Marsh, Davenport. In partnership with the Guardians of the Prairie, Nahant Marsh is conducting its first bioblitz with a 24-hour biological sampling. Guided night and day hikes and interactive displays for children and families. Seeking

experts, specifically insect experts. Contact Amy Loving at aloving@eicc.edu.

Saturday, June 23 – Prairie Walk at Bobwhite State Park, Wayne County. SIOSA members and Wayne County Conservation Board personnel will lead a walk on the Prairie Trail at the park and will identify plants, birds and other wildlife. Check on the time: 641-873-4670; wccb2301@gmail.com

Saturday, June 23 10:30am-12:00pm – First Day Hikes - Summer Hike at Stone State Park, Sioux City. Meet at the parking lot across from the ranger station. Sponsor: Friends of Stone State Park.

Thursday, June 26 7:00pm
Doolittle Prairie Walk
🌸 INPS-sponsored, see May 24.

Saturday, June 30 10:00am-2:00pm
🌸 **INPS Field Trip and Annual Meeting at Cordova County Park in Marion County**
We will meet at the Playground Shelter at 10:00am to learn more about what we will see, and then take off on the field trip. A short trail leads to a natural overlook where a narrow footpath then traverses the blufftop. This will be an easy walk with scenic views of lake, cliff, and woods and interesting botanizing through a band of glade-like vegetation of a mixture of prairie and forest plants, mosses, and lichens.

When we return, we will have a bring-your-own picnic lunch over which we will hold our annual meeting.

John Pearson, Iowa DNR Ecologist, will lead this field trip to one of his favorite spots. He describes it thus: Located on the north shore of Lake Red Rock, Cordova County Park provides great views of Iowa's largest lake from a line of sandstone cliffs and from a 106' tall observation tower.

Cordova County Park

<https://www.mycountyparks.com/county/marion/Park/Cordova-Park.aspx> Lake Red Rock:

<https://goo.gl/images/ktRvGy>

Directions to the Playground Shelter: As you travel inside the park, do not take the road that would take you to the observation tower. Instead,

take the jog to the left and then take the next right turn. Near where the road again angles east, we will meet at the “Playground Shelter” and park at the parking lot across the road to the north. This is John’s map from a previous visit. “Park here” is close to where we will meet. The Playground Shelter and the parking lot are to the right of “Park here.”

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GA3tWTrm4NtUeCycvxbI936sWh2Toc5ORpN1xgohfo0/edit?usp=sharing> Following the field trip, we will have lunch and the annual meeting at the shelter.

Saturday, June 30 9:00am -- Field trip to Dinesen Prairie, 1837 1500th Street, Kirkman. Sponsored by IPN Region 4. lance@goldenhillsrkd.org 712-482-3029

Saturday, July 7-July 10 2018 North American Prairie Conference at the University of Houston - Clear Lake, 2700 Bay Area Blvd, Houston, TX
<https://naprairie.org/2018>

Saturday July 7 10:00-11:00am – Nature Hike at Thomas Mitchell Park in Polk County. Meet at Pond Parking lot, 4250 NE 108 St., Mitchellville. 515-323-5339 Polk County Conservation

Tuesday, July 10 6:30-8:00pm – Prairie Walk at a Private Property near Glenwood. Sponsored by IPN Region 4. lance@goldenhillsrkd.org 712-482-3029

Saturday, July 14
🌸 **INPS field trip at Paule Preserve near Winterset**

10:00am-3:00pm

INPS Field Trip at Paule Preserve near Winterset, Iowa– Saturday, July 14 will be led by Tom Rosburg, Drake University Professor of Biology, John and Shari Paule, landowners, and representation from the INHF.

This will be an opportunity to explore a unique combination of native sedge meadow and wetland, oak/hickory savanna restoration and mesic prairie reconstruction on the same land parcel. Come and learn about the management practices that John and Shari have implemented in their work to transform their site into a high quality conservation area. You can expect to see Yarrow, Meadow Rue, Poison Hemlock, Ox Eye Sunflower, Common and Swamp

Milkweed, St John's Wort, Compass Plant, Grey headed coneflower, Mountain Mint, Bergamot, Canada Wild Rye, Blue Vervain, Purple Prairie Clover, Rattlesnake Master, Ironweed, Milk Vetch, Culver's Root, Bell Flower and Starry Campion, not to mention a wide variety of sedge and native grasses. Mowed paths make it fairly easy to hike throughout the 80 acres, but some terrain is steep. Feel free to spend the day here, where you can also enjoy the view of the North River valley, sit in the shade of our 1950's pole barn, or cook your own mix'ns over the fire pit. Paule Preserve Farm Address: 1745 Summerhill Trail, Van Meter, Iowa. Madison County, Crawford Township, Section 8

Bring a sack lunch. There will be a few tables and chairs available in the shed and around the fire ring. There is a kybo outside the pole barn and a small bathroom inside.

Parking: There is limited parking at top of lane on the East side of the barn. Otherwise park along Summerhill Trail outside gate.

DIRECTIONS: From Des Moines (north), take I-35 to Exit 65, the west on Cumming Road (G14/G4R). Stay on paved surface 5.8 miles then south on gravel Valley View Road. Then 2 miles to "T" intersection, turn right onto Upland Trail for 1.4 miles – you will cross the North River, then right onto Summerhill Trail 0.7 miles. Look for gate on right side of road.

From Bevington (south), take Highway 92 west from Bevington towards Winterset. Then north on Valley View 1.1 mile to 200th Trail, west on 200th Trail .7 miles to Upland Trail, then north on Upland Trail 2.4 miles to Summerhill Trail. Then west on Summerhill Trail .6 mile to farm gate marked with Paule Preserve signs. Look for gate on right side of road.

From Desoto (west), take Highway 169 south 14 miles to Winterset. At the 4-way stop (Highway 92) in Winterset, go east 6.3 miles to 201st Trail (Look for a blue Adopt a Highway Sign). Go north on 201st Trail 0.8 mile (road will bend to the east). At the stop sign, take Summerhill Trail north 3.1 miles. Look for gate on the left (north side) of Summerhill Trail.

Contact: John Paule, 515-240-5778

jmpaule@aol.com

Sunday, July 22 9:00am – Monarch and Milkweed Monitoring at Slip Bluff County Park, Decatur County. 641-446-7307

Thursday, July 26

7:00pm

Doolittle Prairie Walk

 **INPS-sponsored, see May 24.**

Tuesday, August 14 6:30pm – Old Town

Conservation Area, Missouri Valley. Sponsored by IPN Region 4. lance@goldenhillsrccd.org 712-482-3029

Thursday, August 23

7:00pm

Doolittle Prairie Walk Doolittle Prairie Walk

 **INPS-sponsored, see May 24.**

Saturday, August 25

 **INPS field trip to Patton Prairie in Buchanan County (northeast Iowa)**

11:00am-1:00pm

Patton Prairie is owned by the Buchanan County Conservation Board (T89N R8W Section 2 NW4). This 45 acre site has some wonderful high quality mesic and wet-mesic tallgrass prairie in several connected parcels. We will be exploring the summer prairie flora with Mark J. Leoschke, botanist for the Wildlife Bureau of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in Des Moines.

DIRECTIONS:

From Independence (county seat) go east on U.S. Highway 20 to the Winthrop/Quasqueton exit. Turn left (north) onto Racine Avenue (County Highway W40). Travel north about 0.5 mile to 220th Street (County Highway D22). Turn right (east) onto 220th Street. Travel about one mile to Slater Avenue (County Highway W45). Turn left (north) and travel 4 miles to 180th Street (going through the town of Winthrop. McElroy's Food Market, 135 West Madison, on the north side of a main road through town and west of Slater Avenue, has ice, food or beverages if you need to stop to resupply your botanical expedition). Turn left (west) onto 180th Street. Travel approximately 1.5 miles to Quonset Avenue. Turn right (north) onto Quonset Avenue and travel approximately 1.8 miles to a

parking lot just west of Quonset Avenue and south of a farmstead (park on Quonset Avenue if the parking lot is full). We will walk west from the parking lot to the prairie.

Aerial photo of Patton Prairie with property boundaries: http://www.buchanancountyiowa.org/Conservation/Patton_Prairie_aerial_09.pdf

Google Maps photo of Paton Prairie without the property boundaries, but with road names: <https://www.google.com/maps/@42.5523491,-91.7651708,1290m/data=!3m1!1e3?hl=en>

Map with the names of highways, etc. for Buchanan County: <https://iowadot.gov/maps/msp/pdf/buchanan-co.pdf>

Depending on how wet a summer we have this year it would not hurt to wear boots. Even in a wet year most of the prairie can probably be walked in gym shoes, but boots can be handy for looking at lower lying areas if summer happens to be wet.

Tuesday, September 11 6:30pm – Prairie Walk at Folsom Point Preserve, Council Bluffs. Sponsored by IPN Region 4. lance@goldenhillsrca.org 712-482-3029

Saturday, September 15, 2018

 **INPS field trip - Plant and Insect Hike at Red Oak Prairie**

2:00 – 4:00pm

This INPS September field trip is to the same location visited on April 28. MJ Hatfield will also lead this field trip. 2:00 PM - Red Oak Prairie is a private hill prairie remnant located north of Harpers Ferry at 1180 Red Oak Road (no 911 marker, but across the road from 1179 Red Oak Road) which is just off the Great River Road.

Sturdy shoes are a must, perhaps also a walking stick, on this somewhat steep hill prairie. Parking will be at the edge of Red Oak Road but the road is narrow so please, leave room for other vehicles when you park.

Be sure to bring your binoculars. Attendees might want to observe ducks, geese and birds, as the south portion of Red Oak Road is adjacent to the Mississippi River. We will be looking for insects too.

There is an option to join MJ after the hike. The nearby Wexford Fish Fry runs from 4-8pm that day.

For more information, contact MJ at mjhatfield@oneota.org

Saturday, September 22 10:30am – First Day Hikes - Fall Hike at Stone State Park – Meet at the parking lot across from the ranger station.

Tuesday, October 9 6:00pm Prairie Walk at Waubonsie State Park. Sponsored by IPN Region 4. lance@goldenhillsrca.org 712-482-3029

INPS 2018 Annual Meeting

June 30, 10:00am – Cordova County Park on Lake Red Rock

John Pearson will lead the morning walk which will feature a mixture of prairie, savanna and forest vascular plants, mosses and lichens. Lunch will be at the Playground Shelter.

NOTE: A special feature of the annual meeting will be a series of 5-minute presentations about projects involving Iowa flora. If you would like to share, email Lloyd Crim with a paragraph describing your talk. loydcrim@gmail.com

Controlling Garlic Mustard at Rochester Cemetery

Pete Kollasch has scheduled the following dates for pulling garlic mustard at Rochester Cemetery:

Wed, May 2, 10:00am

Sat, May 5, 10:00am

Sun, May 6, 10:00am

Sat, May 12, 10:00am

Sun, May 13, 10:00am

Sun, May 20, 10:00am, if necessary

Contact Pete for more information at pkollasch@gmail.com

State of Iowa
Executive Department

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF IOWA

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Iowa is at the intersection of several important native plant ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, Iowa's native plant species are an important part of our state's heritage and provide valuable aesthetic enjoyment and boost economic status by encouraging tourism and recreation; and

WHEREAS, native plants stem soil erosion, provide habitats for insect and bird pollinators, cleanse water and provide other vital ecological services; and

WHEREAS, native plants are important research subjects for evaluating and protecting the state's prairies, woodlands, wetlands and water resources; and

WHEREAS, native plants are important research subjects for evaluating and protecting the state's prairies, woodlands, wetlands and water resources; and

WHEREAS, there are 390 native plants included on the endangered, threatened and special concern list in Chapter 481B of the Code of Iowa:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Kim Reynolds, Governor of the State of Iowa, do hereby proclaim the month of May 2018 as

WILDFLOWER MONTH

in Iowa.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I HAVE
HEREUNTO SUBSCRIBED MY NAME
AND CAUSED THE GREAT SEAL OF
THE STATE OF IOWA TO BE AFFIXED.
DONE AT DES MOINES THIS 15th DAY
OF MARCH IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND EIGHTEEN

Kim Reynolds
KIM REYNOLDS
GOVERNOR OF IOWA

ATTEST:

Paul Pate
PAUL PATE
SECRETARY OF STATE

2018 INPS Grants Awarded: Your membership dues at work!

Congratulations to our 2018 INPS grant awardees!

INPS has awarded \$3,669.00 to 5 projects that will be completed in 2018. Two of these will pull college students into work on native prairie remnants – to help restore the Pleggenkuhle Prairie owned by Upper Iowa University, and Winneshiek County’s Chipera Prairie near Decorah. A third grant will assist the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation in assembling tool kits (loppers, clippers, saws, etc.) for volunteers performing ecological restoration and invasives removal efforts on INHF lands across the state. The fourth award will assist the Southern Iowa Oak Savanna Alliance (SIOSA) in advertising and printing educational materials for public workshops on prescribed fire and butterfly monitoring, as well as nature walks, to be held this coming spring and summer.

Our 2018 Restore Iowa! grant will pull 16 to 20 teens from socio-economically diverse communities out into the field to attack invasive plants at Fort Des Moines Park in Des Moines. This year’s grant was funded by memorial contributions made in honor of Linda Scarth, who died this past July. Linda was a former INPS president and ongoing active board member, as well as an avid nature photographer who relished native plants and natural areas. She is much missed.

The grants funded are as follows:

“Continued management of university-owned prairie remnant used for conservation and plant research and instruction,” \$1034.

Awarded to Jennifer L. Stoffel and Scott Figdore, professors at Upper Iowa University, Fayette, IA.

“Brush management at Chipera Prairie, Winneshiek County,” \$760. Awarded to Molly McNicoll, professor at Luther College, and Barb Schroeder of the Winneshiek County Conservation Board, Decorah, IA.

“Land Management Kits for Land Ambassadors (Volunteer Program),” \$700. Awarded to Melanie Louis, volunteer coordinator for the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Des Moines.

“Workshops and Education Events in 2018,” \$250. Awarded to Veronica Mecko and Rich Erke, Southern Iowa Oak Savanna Alliance, Leon, IA.

Linda Scarth Memorial “Restore Iowa!” grant award: “2018 Summer Youth Corps Activities,” \$925. Awarded to Erika Schoenberg, Youth Corps Coordinator for Polk County Conservation, Granger, IA.

2017 Grants: Carl Kurtz Final Report

“Plant Species Inventory of Spring Hill Prairie,” \$1,000 to Carl Kurtz

Spring Hill Prairie in northeastern Marshall County contains about 78 acres of mostly grassland habitat. Five plant associations were delineated and mapped – upland prairie is the largest association with 51.5 acres (66%), alluvial grassland is the second largest with 17.8 acres (22.8%), the south lowland grassland occupies 8.1 acres (10.3%), the lowland grove, dominated by box elder and white mulberry, is 0.50 acres (0.6%), and a wet seep occupies 0.2 acres (0.3%).



Spring Hill, photo by Carl Kurtz

There were 211 vascular plants identified on Spring Hill, of which 178 were native and 33 were non-native, resulting in a non-native percentage of 15.4%, a relatively low measure of non-native presence among Iowa natural and semi-natural areas. There were 34 plant species that were observed in six or more of the nine survey units. The species saw-tooth sunflower, Virginia mountain mint, and hairy fruited sedge were the most widespread native species, and white mulberry and reed canary grass were the most widespread non-native species.

There were no species observed that are on the list of priority plant species in Iowa (endangered, threatened, or special concern). However, there were 33 high conservative species ($ICC \geq 7$) found. There were 25 high conservative species observed in the upland prairie community, 11 in the alluvial grassland, 6 in the wet seep, 1 in the south lowland grassland, and 0 in the lowland grove.

The wet seep is the most “pristine” of the five plant associations, as shown by several measures of quality and the highest density of high conservative species and restricted species. The upland prairie exhibited the second highest level of quality. Two survey units in the upland prairie, the west upland prairie and the north central upland prairie, contained significant amounts of remnant prairie populations.

(Written by Dr. Tom Rosburg, who completed the inventory)

2017 Grants: Michael Fallon Final Report

“Fire, Seed, and Soil: Exploring the Relationship between Fire and Iowa's Native Flora,” \$217 to Michael Fallon

The intent of this project was to adapt an outdoor educational presentation—*The Proper Use Of Small-Scale Firefighting and Safety Equipment To Schoolchildren*—to introduce the relationship between fire and Iowa's native flora. Newly adapted material was to be presented in an hour-long class at the outdoor classroom at Robert A. Lee Recreation Center and in conjunction with the City of Iowa City's Office of Parks and Recreation. The new presentation was intended to: (1) target youth at the K-6 grade levels, (2) be free-of-charge and (3) occur at multiple Iowa City Parks and Recreation sponsored classes and camps.

In this particular case, the new presentation morphed into a class entitled “Grow a Pollinator Garden.” The reasons the presentation shifted to focus on (A) the interaction between native wildflower seed and the soil medium and (B) planting a pollinator garden are threefold: (1) the unexpected constraint of presenting only two classes for Iowa City Parks and Recreation, (2) locating partners (and venues) interested in

hosting additional presentations and (3) identifying a practical, hands-on activity with which students, adults, children and parents might easily and comfortably participate.

To that end, I developed an activity whereby attendees would experience viscerally mixing native plant seed with three symbolic representatives of the parent soil medium: (1) topsoil, (2) sand and (3) ash. Overwhelmingly, participants enjoyed the physical sensation of mixing seed and soil while learning of the important relationship between fire and Iowa's tallgrass prairie ecosystem. Furthermore, I believe many attendees came to appreciate the simple, yet elementary fact that fire isn't merely a destructive force, rather, an ally to prairie.

In conclusion, the INPS grant helped me share a different perspective, one in which people recognize the critical role fire has in the Tallgrass Prairie. I learned, despite a seemingly omnipresent message: “fire kills,” the public is receptive when reminded that Euro-American settlers, indigenous peoples, firefighters, etc., have used fire as a tool in myriad ways throughout the ages.



Photo by Michael Fallon

Two Upcoming "Graminoid" Workshops:

1) Cyperaceae Identification Workshop

Dr. Tom Rosburg and Dr. Bill Norris

July 17-19, 2018

Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge
10728 Co Rd X61, Wapello, IA -- 319-523-6982

Cost: \$125 (before June 17); \$150 starting June 18; \$50 for students

Dr. Tom Rosburg (Drake University) and Dr. Bill Norris (Western New Mexico University) are offering a three day Cyperaceae Identification Workshop on the *Carex* genus and larger Cyperaceae (sedge, bulrush, spike-rush, nut sedge) and Juncaceae (rush) families. Students will engage in hands-on exercises to build understanding of descriptive botanical terminology and the ability to correctly use plant keys. Field work will address topics in Cyperaceae ecology, plant species habitats and distribution, plant adaptations and interactions, and plant collection and voucher preparation. Tom and Bill have presented many of these workshops for over 20 years and work hard to provide a high quality experience for students.

Contact Tom for a brochure with registration form: thomas.rosburg@drake.edu 515.271.2920 cell 515.460.4468

2) Grass Identification & Ecology Workshop

Tuesday, August 7 9:30am – Thursday August 9 2:30pm

Whiterock Conservancy, Coon Rapids

Grasses, in the family Poaceae, are arguably the most important plant family, due to their evolution (5th largest family), their ecology (dominance and function in the world's ecosystems), and their ethnobotany (use as food, forage and fiber by humans).

Tom Rosburg, Drake University, is offering a three day grass identification workshop on Iowa and Midwestern Poaceae. The workshop includes fieldwork throughout the Middle Raccoon River Valley at Whiterock Conservancy near Coon Rapids, IA and guided species identification.

The course offers an advanced curriculum for professional conservationists (NRCS, FWS, NPS, ACE), graduate students, and avid amateurs. The hands-on workshop will enhance participants'

field recognition of grass species, their understanding of grass morphology and terminology, the ability to successfully key grass species and conduct field assessments, and their understanding of ecological relationships among grass species. Field work will investigate the grasses in several plant associations including wetlands, oak savanna and forest, and prairie communities.

Participants will use dissecting scopes to learn grass morphology and key specimens. Workshop materials include handouts of the presentations used and floristic keys to identify grasses.

Contact **Rob Davis** at Whiterock Conservancy, phone number 712-790-8221 ext. 4 or email landmanager@whiterockconservancy.org, to register or for additional course information. **The cost of the workshop is \$200 and includes workshop materials, two nights of lodging, and meals.** Registration is payable to Whiterock Conservancy.

The workshop will begin August 7 at 9:30 a.m. and finish on August 9 at 2:30 p.m. The workshop will be held at the Bur Oak Visitor Center located 1 mile east of Coon Rapids on Highway 141. Tom Rosburg, Professor, Department of Biology, and Curator of the Herbarium at Drake University will be the instructor.

Peculiar persimmons and another out-of-place plant at Howell Station, Lake Red Rock (cont'd from page 1)

John knew quite a bit about persimmon trees and even knew of other blue/purple skinned varieties. He said most of the known purple skinned varieties were out of regular production because they produced poor tasting fruit. So I tasted the fruits of the Howell Station giant blueberry persimmon and they tasted as good as the average orange variety growing alongside them at the site and like a persimmon growing next to my house back in Richmond, Virginia. John also told me that persimmons come in both 60 and more cold hardy 90 chromosome varieties and that the purple one is most likely one of the 90 chromosome varieties in order to tolerate a northern climate.

The persimmons have been at Howell Station perhaps for a very long time. Since only questionably native to Iowa around Keokuk, perhaps the initial trees that were first planted here date to times past when Howell was a town and Howell Station was a

stop along the local railroad. It seems unlikely that they would have been planted at the time that the Army Corps of Engineers assumed responsibility for the area.



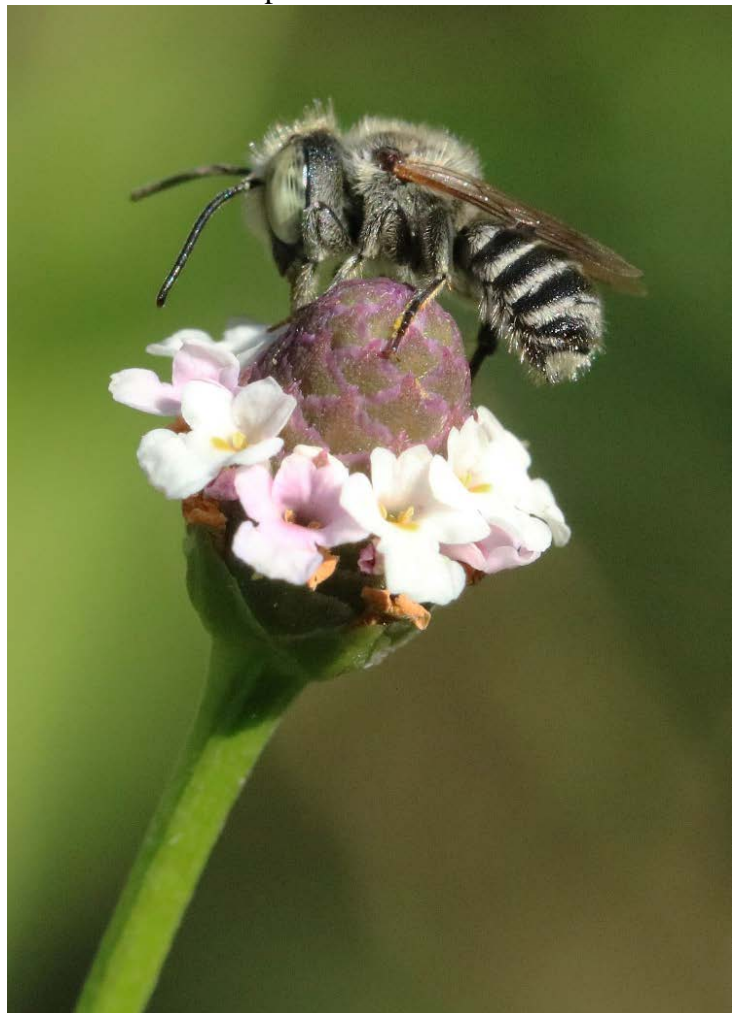
Phyla lanceolata, photo by Stephen Johnson

Much later, in the late summer of 2013, about 50 feet below the North Overlook parking area (now closed because of a new hydroelectric station) and 70 feet away from the persimmons, I happened upon another strange sight, a northern frogfruit plant, *Phyla (Lippia) lanceolata*, growing on top of a hill. Northern frogfruit or northern frogfruit is a fairly widespread and common wetland plant. I had seen it growing in its normal habitat of shallow water just at the water's edge at North Tailwater many years before. In the wetland, it grew with floral scapes reaching heights of over a foot to two feet in height. So then, what was it doing here on a dry hilltop? I had always thought it an obligate wetland plant. Sylvan Runkel and Dean Roosa in *Wildflowers and Other Plants of Iowa Wetlands* describe it as an obligate wetland plant as does a page on the USDA website. What I saw suggested that this individual representative of the species was now at least a facultative wetland plant but really on this hill, behaving as an upland plant. I searched the area near the first upland northern frogfruit and between the hill and the wetland where the species was first sighted, and found about 10

separate upland northern frogfruit clones. Not only was northern frogfruit now in a different habitat, it was now growing with a different habit of low stature spreading clumps and short (four to eight inch) scapes.

In previous years walking this same path I had not seen this upland northern frogfruit and so I thought it could even be a recent varietal divergence. As it turns out also a very adaptive change since the local area has been subject to a rather lengthy period of drought essentially beginning in the late summer of 2011.

I transplanted a sprig of this upland frogfruit to my yard in 2013 and it grew into a large clump. I also thought the short stature of the upland plants at Howell Station could be an adaptive response to mowing. But in my yard, where it is not mowed, it retains the short statured mat forming habit. I also have many chances to see that it draws several kinds of bees and moths and generally seems a popular source of nectar for pollinators.



Male *Megachile* on *Phyla*, photo by Stephen Johnson

Just a short while later it turned out that the area where the frogfruit grows became off-limits due to construction of a hydroelectric power station over much of what was North Tailwater.

Iowa is America's most biologically altered state, by Mark S. Edwards, reprinted from the Ames Tribune, December 27, 2013 (Opinion article)

We are struggling to understand how environmental issues such as water quality, ethanol and farming relate to our lives. I retired as trails coordinator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources after 30 years of traveling the state extensively and seriously studying our relationships to where we live. This study is called ecology.

The basic foundation of ecology is that all life is directly related and mutually dependent. This means the more species diversity, the healthier the ecosystem and the healthier the individual. Simply said, we are all in this together. Our health and happiness are directly dependent on the health of the place we live. Don't foul your own nest.

One way to illustrate this is by using a Department of Transportation map of Iowa. Lay it flat on a table. It represents 36 million acres. Rip off two-thirds of the map and put it behind you. This represents the number of acres planted each year in just two annual species – corn and soybeans – requiring petroleum, fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides and washing away soil to the sea.

Now remove three-fourths of what's left of your map. This represents the 26 percent of Iowa used for other agricultural purposes such as hay, pasture, ponds and farmsteads. In a matter of a few generations, 93 percent of our state has been transformed for agricultural purposes. The loss of species diversity is incomprehensible to us today.

From the portion left on the table remove a piece the size of a CD case. This represents 6 percent of Iowa, or around 2 million acres that are covered in cities and roads. The size of the piece left on the table is smaller than the size of a check. It represents all public land – city parks, county, state and federal – or less than 3 percent of Iowa.

Looking closer at the remaining piece we find it covered in thousands of parking lots, hundreds of miles of interior roads, artificial lakes, campgrounds, ballfields, toilets, playgrounds, sewage lagoons, golf courses and picnic areas.

Hundreds of thousands of acres contain non-native species. A majority of our public land was also clear-cut, plowed, mined and heavily grazed before being protected and allowed to heal. Easily, less than half of the public land, the size of a credit card, has little original biological integrity left.

Now cut the credit card into hundreds of small pieces and scatter them over the area of the original, uncut map. Not one of these pieces of public land can maintain its existing species as they are isolated and disconnected from the whole, much like we are. In relationship to the health of our homeland it matters little whether the land is private or public. It does matter how it is used.

It is often said that we don't value things until they are rare. We now live in the rarest state in North America — the most biologically altered. Our health is not measured by the price of corn but by the company we keep. We are all stockholders in the corporation of creation and evolution. As the author Henry David Thoreau said, "In wildness is the preservation of the world."

We must carefully consider the debates over soil loss, ethanol, water quality and voluntary conservation practices within a richer, wilder story of ecology and hope for improving all our lives, including more than just us humans.

We cannot survive by dividing into two sides with different realities of where we live. We cannot lose sight of the one world we live in and are directly dependent upon.



Trillium recurvatum, prairie trillium, photo by Deb Lewis

“Little Anemone” (*Thalictrum thalictroides*)

Pleasant and lovely flower

Appearing just in time

Tiny floral jewel of spring

Dainty miniscule *Anemone*=*Anemonella*

Bearing your leaves like citrus rue,

A rue without regret,

But also like *Thalictrum* or *Aquilegia*

How can you be called *Thalictrum* that looks like *Thalictrum*?

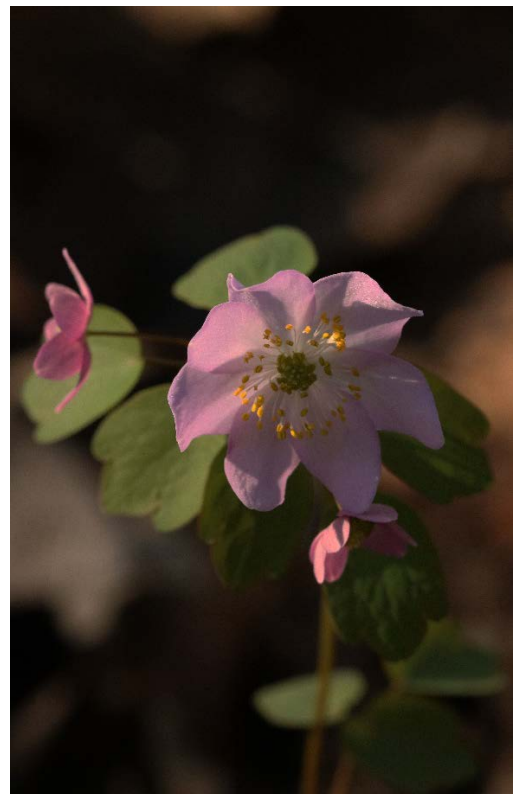
Sepals pink, conjuring cotton candy

Or even watermelon flesh

Yet you offer nothing sweet for bees

Little daughter of the wind.

Poem and photos by Stephen Johnson



Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip code: _____ County: _____

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Membership categories and dues:

____\$10 Member, please add \$5 for receiving newsletter by US Post; ____\$25* Anemone, ____\$50* Botrychium,
____\$100* Calamagrostis, ____\$150* Dodecatheon, ____\$200 and up* Erythronium, ____\$5 Student (one-time
payment while a student)

Send with your dues to: Bill Blankenship, INPS Treasurer
737 Buckwalter Drive, Sioux City, IA 51108

I wish to receive my newsletter via: email _____ USPS _____

INPS Endowment – information about the endowment and how to contribute, as well as a link for donations are available at:
<http://www.communityfoundationofjohnsoncounty.org/give/established-funds-z-partners-philanthropy/iowa-native-plant-society/> (See our website at www.iowanativeplants.org for more information.)

The INPS mailing list is never distributed to other organizations or companies.

Dues are payable on a calendar year basis from January 1 to December 31. Please use this form for changes of address.

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

INPS NEWSLETTER
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