

Iowa Prairie Network Newsletter

Spring 2019



Rochester Cemetery – Photo by Tenlea Turner

A Message From Our President

Submitted by IPN President – Michelle Biodrowski

How long does it take? It took me some 20 odd years to find the Prairie. Now I look back on those 20 or so years, back to the person who was ignorant, who had no love for the Great Plains. I used to yearn for the ocean, the mountains, the tropical forests; I couldn't see what was all around me. I can't blame myself for overlooking the great diversity held in the Great Plains - the point of ignorance is that you don't know what you don't know.

I didn't know about the grasses that tower over our heads. I didn't know about the flowers that are so intensely pigmented they look like they are glowing. I had no idea of all the uncountable threads of co-dependence, of co-evolution that tie the natural world together into a network of invisible webs.

As luck would have it, I met passionate people that knew the prairie, and they showed it to me. Now I see the bronzy splashes of rich wine-colored grasses in the winter when most of the landscape is drab and asleep. I feel the pull to go exploring the fields of flowers, grasses, and sedges, where insects, birds, mammals, and frogs dance their chaotic dance of life. I see the endless edges, the waves of invading, smothering exotic plants, the unstoppable tractor, and the boundless wave of humanity. I see my own footprints on this beautiful, diverse landscape.



IPN President, Michelle Biodrowski

Now I have the prairie in my mind and my heart. Now I live with the desire to reconnect others and myself back to the land, to the plants, the birds, the insects, the wind, the fire, and all the mysterious connections that nature relies on that we overlook.

I hope to share this passion with our network of people, our Iowa Prairie Network, and I hope to share time in the field with you.

Here is to the New Year, to new discoveries in the field, to new connections with each other and our land.

Introducing the Newly Elected Executive Committee

Michelle Biodrowski, President: Michelle has a BS and Master's in Biology from University of Nebraska-Omaha. She has worked with IPN, The Nature Conservancy, IA Department of Natural Resources, and the Loess Hills Nature School conducting workshops and guided tours to help educate people in the value of our prairie heritage.

Jon Judson, Vice President: Jon has been with IPN for many years. He has a BS and Master's in Wildlife Biology from ISU and is the owner of Diversity Farms, Inc., a natural resource consulting and management business aimed at protecting and restoring native prairie.

Ed Sibley, Treasurer: Ed has a BA from Morningside and MA from Syracuse. He is a retired teacher from Western Iowa Tech where he taught subjects including Banking and Finance, Business Law I and II, and Money and Banking. He is involved in multiple habitat restoration projects in the Sioux City area.

Corinne Bulat, Secretary: Corrine's career path began in the study of architecture at ISU then switched paths to Biological Illustration and a degree in Design. A land-stewardship internship with INHF led her desire to help maintain, restore, and protect prairies, and to her current position as Natural Resource Technician at Stonehaven in DeSoto, IA.

IPN Committees

Communications and Events

Chair: Anna Golightly
Newsletter Subcommittee
Editor: Tenlea Turner

Finance

Chair: Joyce Hornstein

Membership

Chair: Leesa McNeil

Prairie Highlight

Bluevine (*Cynanchum laeve*) - Photo by Tenlea Turner

Page 2

Bluevine - Who Knew?

Submitted by Tenlea Turner

We've all heard about the importance of milkweed (*Asclepias* sp.) to the survival of the monarch butterfly. It is essential to monarch reproduction and also a valuable nectar resource. But did you know that bluevine (*Cynanchum laeve*) is also recognized as a monarch host plant? Although it is not a milkweed, it is a member of the Asclepiadaceae family and monarchs love it!

Bluevine (aka honeyvine) is native to the Iowa landscape. To the untrained eye it can easily be mistaken for non-native bindweed (*Convolvulus* sp.) - until it blooms, or goes to seed. The bluevine has clusters of tiny white flowers (sometimes with pinkish tips), unlike the familiar trumpet-like flowers of bindweed. A close look at the leaves will also differentiate the two. Bluevine has cordate (heart shaped) leaves and bindweed leaves are sagittate (arrowhead-shaped). Finally, bluevine develops follicles (seed pods) containing numerous seeds with tufts of white hairs similar to milkweed; bindweed develops a well-rounded seed capsule that contains 4 seeds.

It would be remiss not to mention somewhere in this piece that morning glory species, native or not, can also be confused with the aforementioned vining plants. They generally have broad heart-shaped leaves, funnelform flowers in variations of white or purple, spherical, often hairy seed capsules, and are a member of the Convolvulaceae family.

Suffice it to say that if you find a vining plant in your yard, garden, or prairie, take a close look before you attempt to eradicate it. It could be a much-needed host for the monarch butterfly. Who knew? You, that's who.



Photos left to right: Monarch egg on bluevine leaf; 5th instar monarch caterpillar reared from egg to adult on bluevine; bluevine with seed pod; bindweed (*Convolvulus* sp.) - Photos by Tenlea Turner

IPN Board of Directors

Region 1

Leesa McNeil

Benjamin Maas

Region 2

Vacant

Vacant

Region 3

Daryl Smith

Vacant

Region 4

Lance Brisbois

Vacant

Region 5

Luke Gran

Anna MacDonald

Region 6

Tenlea Turner

Pam White

Region 7

Ray Hamilton

Jennifer Kruse

At Large

Michelle Biodrowski

Jon Judson

Vacant

Ed Sibley

Corinne Bulat

Jacob Pitzenberger



"Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better."

Albert Einstein

Membership Corner

IPN has 148 members that share an enthusiasm for prairies! Consider joining today!

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____ County: _____

Email: _____

Phone (optional): _____ Circle one: home - work - cell

Membership Levels & Dues (check one):

- Student Free; please provide a valid school email address or ID
 Intern \$10
 Individual \$20
 Family \$30

Newsletter Options (check one):

- Prefer to receive newsletters via e-mail at the address listed above \$0
 Prefer to receive printed newsletters via mail add \$5

IPN is an IRS approved 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization

Please make checks payable to:

Iowa Prairie Network

c/o Edward M. Sibley, Treas. 4015 Sergeant Road, Sioux City, IA 51106

The membership form can also be downloaded from our website – click “Join Us”

Don't forget to **RENEW** your membership! Go to www.iowaprairienetwork.org.
Thank you!

Have you registered your prairie or garden with Plant.Grow.Fly. yet?



Let's get down and dirty, plant the seeds and watch them grow and fly! Blank Park Zoo is offering discounted zoo membership to PGF Gardeners when they register their garden!

www.plantgrowfly.org

The Iowa Prairie Network is a grass-roots, volunteer organization that is dedicated to the preservation of Iowa's prairie heritage. IPN was formed in 1990 by Iowans concerned that our prairie heritage was disappearing. People needed an organization that would bring those who know about prairie together with those who wanted to learn, to form a network of advocacy for Iowa's natural heritage.

Spring 2019 Events

Upcoming Events – check the IPN calendar for details, updates and more events!

www.iowaprairienetwork.org

March	6-8	Iowa Weed Commissioners' Association Invasive Species Conference - Quality Inn & Suites in Ames, IA
	12	Prairies and Pints - Barley's Bar, Council Bluffs, IA
	29-30	Day of Insects Workshops & Opening Reception - Reiman Gardens, Ames, IA
April	9	Iowa Reptiles – Jester Park Nature Center – www.polkcountyiowa.gov
	13	Loess Hills Pasque Flower Walk – Harrison County
	20	Earth Day Championship – Hitchcock Nature Center – www.pottcoconservation.com
May	16	Codfish Hollow Hill Prairie Walk – contact Jackson County Conservation at (563) 652-3783
	23	Doolittle Prairie Walk – Story County – Series of 4 (6/27, 7/25, 8/22)
	26	Slow Sunday Drive – Whiterock Conservancy www.whiterockconservancy.org



Trout lily
Photo by Tenlea Turner

Continue checking IPN Calendar at www.iowaprairienetwork.org for additional events and details



Iowa Prairie Network, Inc.
4015 Sergeant Rd.
Sioux City, IA 51106-4013
iowaprairienetworkorg@gmail.com
www.iowaprairienetwork.org

IPN's Mission: To Learn About, Teach About, Enjoy, and Protect Iowa's Prairie Heritage

Spring 2019

Inside this issue:

A Message From Our President
Introducing Our Newly Elected Executive Committee

1

Prairie Highlight: Bluevine – Who Knew?

2

IPN Board Members and Region Map

2

Membership Corner

3

Upcoming Events

3

Like us on Facebook! Join the group!

We use our Facebook Page and Group to share prairie-related news and updates. Join our online community!



www.facebook.com/IowaPrairieNetwork



@iowaprairienetwork

Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge— Photo by Tenlea Turner

