

Save the planet! Please save/bring this program with you as a limited number will be printed and available at the IPC.

Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, Regents Resource Center
1838 Highway 86, Milford, IA 51351

“Prairies – Resilient lands for the future!”

About the Laboratory

Lakeside Lab is owned by the state of Iowa and operated through the Board of Regents. Its mission is twofold: 1) to provide science classes and research opportunities for university students, and 2) to offer Outreach Programs and provide services through the state universities. Lakeside's 147-acre campus is located on scenic West Okoboji Lake, on Little Millers Bay. The bay and adjacent natural areas are used as outdoor classrooms for Lakeside's university courses and Outreach Programs. The campus is open year-round, and visitors are welcome to visit during daylight hours. The Laboratory is located on Highway 86, north of Milford IA. As you get close on Highway 86, look for the silver water tower on the opposite (west) side of the road from the Laboratory. Lakeside's entrance is marked by stone gates that are normally open. When you arrive please check in at the North Office. There is plenty of free parking.

Housing/Meals

Note – no blocks of rooms have been reserved and lodging in the Lakes area over the summer gets booked quickly.

The Lakeside Lab has some rooms/dorms available – reserve by contacting: 712-337-3669 Ext 5.

Area hotels can be found at this link: <https://vacationokoboji.com/stay/>

Meals are provided for those that register for the conference. The Laboratory is located some miles from restaurants, theaters, bars, etc. Attendees may bring their own food though cooking is not allowed in any housing unit.

Conference meals: Friday evening: camp-fire hotdog/brats/chips/water/ice tea/cookies/beer)

Saturday morning: muffins/fruit kabobs/coffee/juice/water

Saturday lunch: BBQ pork sandwiches/chips/apple/water/tea

Saturday afternoon snack: single serve ice cream bars/sandwiches

Saturday evening: pizza party/water/tea/beer

Sunday morning: donuts/rolls/fruit/coffee/juice/water

Sunday lunch: box sandwich/chips/cookie/water/tea

Single-use plastic-free event: The 2024 IPC will not be utilizing any single-use plastics during the event. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own reusable beverage bottles. Paper cups/plates will be available during the event.

Prairie Bouquet contest: Attendees are invited to bring a bouquet of prairie flowers in a quart jar and compete for a **\$100** gift certificate toward prairie seeds from Diversity Farms. Attendees will vote for the winner. Bouquets should be submitted at the registration table by the start of Saturday's programs. The winner will be announced at the end of the education session on Saturday.

Cost to attend (includes meals and Saturday/Sunday hike transportation): \$50

Participate virtually in the Saturday, August 17th educational program: \$10

Conference updates will be available at: <https://www.iowaprairienetwork.org/>

Review this program prior to registering to consider which hikes/outings you are interested in attending!

Link to register to attend in-person or virtually: <https://friendsoflakesidelab.org/2024-iowa-prairie-conference/>

Iowa Prairie Conference Schedule of events

Friday, August 16th

1:00 – 3:00 pm **Prairie Strips** (adjacent to Big Spirit Lake) – Tim Youngquist, Farmer Liaison, Ryan Schmidt, Central Iowa Land Stewardship Director with Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF), and Prairie STRIPS team at ISU will participate in the event. (Individuals interested in this session should drive to the session prior to checking-in at Lakeside Lab registration.) Directions: Field north of 13026 – 253rd Ave., Orleans, IA. Note – location is accessible along the paved walking path next to Big Spirit Lake (attendees may park in the grass along the shoulder of the road. Easy hike - NO restroom facilities are at the site.

Participants will get to see two different working row crop fields and learn how prairie strips can retain soil, filter water and create wildlife habitat. INHF will provide an overview of the goals, land stewardship history, and successes/challenges at Wallace & Bowers Nature Area. Participants will see two wetland restorations and three prairie reconstructions at INHF's property. Attendees will meet as directed here and be given instructions for driving to the second location that is closeby.

3:15 – 5:00 pm Iowa Prairie Network annual meeting. Main floor meeting room,

Lakeshore Center, 1864 Hwy 86, Milford, IA

Iowa Native Plant Society annual meeting – rescheduled – date to be announced

5:00 – 8:00 pm Registration/check-in – at the Iowa Lakeside Lab – 1838 Hwy 86, Milford, IA

Hot dog/brat cookout (5:30 – 7:00 pm) and campfire

Music provided by [Tom Nothnagle | Guitarist | All Things Guitar Tom](#)

As a native Iowan, **Tom** began serving in 1990 as a rostered artist for the **Iowa Arts Council** offering cultural and historical music demonstrations including classical guitar, flamenco guitar, historical banjo, baroque mandolin, and antique parlor guitar.

6:00 – 8:00 pm 30-minute virtual welcome/tours of portions of the Laboratory shown every 30 minutes at the Iowa Lakeside Lab – 1838 Hwy 86, Milford, IA

6:00 – 8:00 pm Poster session at Iowa Lakeside Lab

Saturday, August 17th - Lakeshore Center, 1864 Hwy 86, Milford, IA

(Note – Saturday education sessions will also be recorded for later viewing on the Iowa Prairie Network website.)

8:00 – 9:00 am – Registration and breakfast -- muffins/fruit kabobs/coffee/juice/water

9:00 – 9:15 am – Welcome and conference updates – Mary Skopec, Director, Iowa Lakeside Lab

9:15-10:15 am – History of Caylor State Preserve - Keynote address by John Pearson, DNR Ecologist

10:15-11:15 am – Prairie fens - Dr. Rebecca Kauten

11:15 – 11:30 am break

11:30 – 12:30 pm – Prairies and People : A Look at the Prehistoric Occupation and Use of the Tall Grass Prairies, Mark Anderson, Archaeologist/ Sanford Museum

North America was fully occupied by people when the tall grass prairies expanded across the midcontinent. This expansion was triggered by multiple factors including continued evolution of grasses and other plants, climatic shifts, changes in faunal communities, and human impacts. Prehistoric peoples manipulated their world for better living and the same was done to the tall grass prairies. This presentation will look at what we currently know about these human impacts with a focus on Iowa and the Upper Midwest.

12:30 – 1:15 pm - Saturday lunch: BBQ pork sandwiches/chips/apple/water/tea

1:15 – 2:15 pm – Burn cooperatives and Prescribed Fire -panel moderated by Dr. Rosburg, Professor of Biology, Drake University, Panel members: Kody Wohlers, Land Stewardship Director, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Amy Crouch-Little Sioux Project Director, The Nature Conservancy, Dale Maxson, Eastern Iowa Land Steward, The Nature Conservancy

1:30 – 2:15 pm – Prairies 101 with Dr. Russ Benedict, Central College

(To be held at Iowa Lakeside Lab – 1838 Hwy 86, Milford, IA)

2:15 - 2:30 pm - Saturday afternoon snack – sponsored by The Northwest Iowa Group Sierra Club
single serve ice cream bars/sandwiches

Vote for Prairie Bouquet winner at registration table

2:30 – 3:15 pm – The Farm Bill and follow-up from the Iowa Nature Summit

Dr. Neil Hamilton, Emeritus Professor of Law, Drake University Agricultural Law Center

3:15 – 4:00 pm – Prairies and Soil Restoration: A Story of Conservation, Carbon, Cash and Caution

Dr. Marshall McDaniel- Assistant Professor, Agronomy, Iowa State University

4:00 –4:15 pm. Presentation of the Prairie Advocate Awards– Mark Leoschke, Botanist, Iowa DNR and Dr. Tom Rosburg, Professor of Biology, Drake University

4:15 - 4:30 pm Overview of hikes and outings – Mary Skopec
Announce winner of the Prairie Bouquet contest

5:00 – 6:00 pm Saturday evening: pizza party/water/tea/beer – Lakeside Lab

Hikes / Outings – NOTE -free transportation to Saturday/Sunday hikes!

Saturday, August 17th – three evening options

6:30 – 8:00 pm Queen II excursion – restoration of shoreline using native plants

John Wills, Clean Water Coordinator and Iowa Great Lakes Project Coordinator

Meet at: 37 Lake Street, Arnolds Park, IA 51331 (15 minute drive from the Lab)

As famous as the Park itself, the **Queen II** is an **Okoboji** favorite. In the late 19th century, the **lakes** region became a resort area and the small steamboats and sailboats could not keep up with the flow of vacationers. The **Queen II**, a large steamer, was constructed, along with other larger **boats**, to accommodate this new need.

6:30 – 8:00 pm Excelsior Fen / Dugout Creek Complex – Leaders Drew Howing, Assistant Professor and Environmental Studies Program Coordinator, Iowa Lakes Community College and Chris LaRue, Wildlife Management Biologist, DNR

“The Iowa DNR manages this vast complex that contains a variety of special habitats including a large semi-permanent wetland, smaller seasonal/ephemeral wetlands, and an excelsior fen. The site also includes multiple areas of reconstructed prairie and some small remnants that have not been plowed. Due to the site's unique topography, hydrology, and geologic history, these areas have been minimally changed by human activities since European settlement making it a gem in the great lakes area for rare plants, migratory birds, and threatened reptiles such as the Blanding's turtle. Although there are no specific trails, the 1,126-acre site provides plenty of space to explore and so much to see. Get out and collaborate with other professionals to examine and discuss current management and research that is being done to help preserve these unique parts of Iowa's resources. Whether you want to learn more about the fen plant association, discuss prairie reconstructions and management, or talk turtles- this exercise will provide an opportunity for all to take away something new that can be applied to our professional careers.”

Driving Directions: 130th Ave – From the Intersection of Hwy 9 and Hwy 86 (west of Spirit Lake) – Drive 7 miles west on Hwy 9 and then one mile south. GPS Coordinates -- N43deg25.798 W095deg19.42

There are no restrooms (and nearly zero trees) available.

6:30 – 8:00 pm Freda Haffner Kettlehole - TNC – Scott Moats, Director of Lands/Fire Manager Iowa and Missouri, TNC and Amy Crouch, Little Sioux Project Director, TNC

Easy hike, no restrooms available on-site

Southwest of Okoboji, in Dickinson County, Iowa (15 minutes west of Spirit Lake).

From Milford: Take Highway 71 north to Highway 86. Turn west and go one-and-one-half miles to 210th Street (by Oh Shuck's Bait Shop). Go west two-and-three-quarter miles to the parking area for the preserve on the north side of the road (Sign: Freda Haffner Preserve).

This area contains geological formations known as kettleholes. Historically, these were formed when giant blocks of ice from glaciers fell off and melted, making large bowl-shaped indentations in the ground. These unique geological formations make this preserve one of the more popular in the state. It often is used by schoolchildren, college students and many other groups to learn about prairie life. This site also is particularly distinctive and educational because the threatened prairie bush clover is found here. The natural communities here include the unique kettle wetland, dry gravel prairie to mesic prairie on the ridgetops and slopes, and wet mesic prairie and sedge meadow in the floodplain. The diversity of high-quality habitats supports more than 360 vascular plants, 34 bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) and numerous lichens.

Sunday, August 18th

7-9 am Birding at the Lakes –Don Vrchota, Nature Enthusiast – Meet at Lakeside Lab.

8:00 – 9:30 am – Breakfast at the Lab

9:00 – 10:00 AM – A Lifetime of Musings on Iowa's Fragile Giants and Fragile Landscapes. This talk by Connie Mutel will take place in the meeting room at Lakeside Lab.

Connie Mutel will reflect on changes in the natural world and life in Iowa over her lifetime.

This talk commemorates the publication of her books *Fragile Giants: A Natural History of the Loess Hills*, 35 years ago, and *Land of the Fragile Giants* (co-edited with Mary Swander), 30 years ago.

9:00- 10:00 Tour of Garlock Slough –Dusten Paulus, Natural Resources Tech II-DNR

Meet at the breakfast area for a guided tour of this DNR wildlife area.

Low intensity hike. Restroom available at nearby business just a few hundred yards from the site.

The Garlock Slough WMA (Wildlife Management Area) native remnant prairie site is an absolute jewel nestled on the south side of West Lake Okoboji. This 20-acre site is just a small part of a much larger (several thousand acre) grassland/wetland complex which helps filter the beautiful waters of West Lake Okoboji. The Frailey Tract, where the 20-acre remnant prairie can be found, hugs the west shore of Garlock Slough proper, a 92-acre shallow lake/large wetland. The remnant prairie was recently rescued from woody encroachment and has undergone many management activities in recent years, which have brought back to life the native plants that once flourished on site. A recent inventory was completed by DNR botanist Mark Leoschke and he documented 141 native remnant species on site, including the rare Richardson's sedge (*Carex richardsonii*). Please consider coming out to see this beautiful remnant site and learn of the recent management activities to the prairie, as well as the renovations to the adjacent shallow lake that are taking place to return these areas back to its pre settlement conditions.

9:00 – 10:30 – The Prairie Flower – Dwight and Bev Rutter, co-owners

The Prairie Flower, LLC, is a native seed dealer in rural northwest Iowa. It is owned and operated by a farm couple working on a square mile of sand, gravel, farmland, native prairie, wetlands, and the Little Sioux River. They provide local ecotype native prairie and wetland seeds, as well as native cultivar seed, pasture and hay seed, and lawn grass mixes. Their services include seeding, ecological consulting and planning, natural land management and landscaping.

Address: 1760 290th Street, Spencer, Iowa 51301-7409. (16 miles / 22 minutes from Lakeside Lab)

9:00 – 10:30 am Archeological outing – Mark Anderson, Archaeologist/ Sanford Museum

In 1857, amidst rising tensions between Native Americans and new settlers, 13-year-old Abbie Gardner's family was killed by men of the Dakota Indian nation. This tragedy became known as the Spirit Lake Conflict. Young Abbie was taken hostage by the Dakota band and released 84 days later. Decades after the massacre, in 1891, Abbie returned to Arnolds Park and purchased the cabin, operating it as one of Iowa's earliest tourist attractions.

11:00 – 12:30 Box lunch at the Lakeside Lab

1:00 pm Oak Savanna restoration (east side of Spirit Lake by Angler's Bay) – Dusten Paulus, Natural Resources Tech II-DNR and Mark Gulick, District Supervisor-Northwest District of the Wildlife Bureau, DNR

DNR AND PARTNERS' GOALS & OBJECTIVES for the area include removing invasive riparian trees to provide needed sunlight to bulrush and near-shore native aquatic and terrestrial plant beds. Where needed, consider reestablishing near-shore aquatic and terrestrial plants. Plans also include restoring the oak savanna community by removing invasive trees and retaining most native hardwoods such as bur oak, basswood, and hackberry. Where needed, reestablish native grass, forb, and tree species (primarily bur oak) on upland areas. Finally, efforts will be made to remove green ash trees before Emerald Ash Borer reaches Dickinson County and while these trees have some market value; thereby reducing project costs.

1:00 pm Kirchner Prairie (20 miles from the Lab) –Lucas Straw, Prairie Lakes Wildlife Unit Biologist, DNR

At this 160 acre prairie/marsh complex you can choose to stay dry, or venture out where your feet get wet. A cattail marsh gives way to a sedge meadow which blends into one of the best examples of virgin prairie in the region. Turtles and Phalaropes and Wrens, oh my!!

Pothole Birding - Known nesters at this site include the Wilson's Phalarope, Sedge Wren, Bobolink, Vesper Sparrow, and a variety of waterfowl as well as more common grassland bird species. Threatened and endangered species here are the Smooth Green Snake, the Blanding's Turtle, and the Showy milkweed. Other plants to be found include the Common horsetail, Yellow stargrass, Blue flag iris, Michigan lily, Wild onion, White camas, Rattlesnake master, Butterfly milkweed, Heath aster, Silky aster, Pale purple coneflower, Compass plant, Ironweed, Hoary puccoon, Blue lobelia, False indigo, Bottle gentian, Mountain mint, Evening primrose, Sweet William, Pasqueflower, New Jersey tea, Culver's root, and Prairie violet.

Driving Directions and other Information

Located 2 miles south of Dan Green Slough off B 17, 7 miles west of Hwy 71 north of Spencer (2734 310th Street)

GPS Coordinates - N43deg12.865 W095deg00.639

160 acres, Easy hiking, Binoculars, Prairie Plants, NO restroom facilities at the site

1:00 pm Cayler Prairie – hike/walk (8 minutes/5.7 miles from the Lab)

John Pearson, DNR Ecologist and co-leader Mark Leoschke, DNR Botanist

From the intersection of Highway 9 and Highway 86 on the west side of the town of Spirit Lake, take Highway 9 west 3.5 miles to 170th Avenue (sign: Cayler Prairie State Preserve—2 miles). Turn south (left) and go 2.5 miles to the preserve. A parking area is available on the east side of the road (sign: Cayler Prairie State Botanical Monument).

No restrooms available on-site. The walk will be east-to-moderate on gently rolling terrain – approximately a loop of one mile.

Cayler Prairie is a 160-acre native prairie on the western edge of the Des Moines Lobe landform region. It is located three miles west of West Okoboji Lake in Dickinson County. In 1944, botanist Ada Hayden visited the prairie, which was then being used as a hayfield and pasture, and recommended that it be preserved. In 1958, the Iowa Conservation Commission purchased the property from the Cayler family, who had owned the tract since settlement of the region in the 1860s. Cayler Prairie was designated as a National Natural Landmark in 1966 and was dedicated as a state preserve in 1971. An additional 385 acres of former pasture and cropland to the north and east were purchased by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in 1998.

The preserve is located on the western limit of glacial advances that pushed into north-central Iowa between 13,000 and 14,000 years ago. Accumulations of glacial debris left behind as the ice stagnated and slowly melted formed the irregular -assortment of knobs and basins seen across this preserve and its surroundings. These areas of hummocky terrain (low irregular hills) are part of the Bemis and Alta-mont end moraines, which mark the outermost lateral positions of the glacier. The moraines continue across the remainder of the Des Moines Lobe region of north-central Iowa, the portion of the state last touched by continental glaciation.

A total of 225 native plant species have been found in the prairie, including 35 -species of grass. The prairie is dominated by big bluestem, Indian grass, little blue-stem, muhly grass, and blue grama grass. Pasqueflower, golden alexanders, ground-plum, and Lambert's crazyweed are very common in the spring. By summer, gray-headed cone-flower, Culver's root, sawtooth sunflower, and prairie rose are prominent bloomers. Missouri goldenrod, New England aster, and dotted gayfeather are abundant in the fall.

A total of seventy-two vertebrate species includes four amphibians, seven reptiles, thirty-five birds, and twenty-six mammals. Northern chorus frogs, the eastern tiger salamander, and prairie skink are some of the amphibians and reptiles that might be observed. Common yellowthroat, bobolink, northern harrier, upland sandpiper, grasshopper sparrow, horned lark, and short-billed marsh wren are some of the birds that can be found at the preserve. Mammals found here include the white-tailed jackrabbit, least weasel, and badger. Over twenty-five species of butterflies have been reported from the preserve, including the Dakota skipper, Poweshiek skipperling, Arogos skipper, Ottoe skipper, regal fritillary, and dusted skipper.

Iowa Lakeside Laboratory students use the preserve every summer, and much research has been done over the years. Hunting is permitted. Other state preserves in the vicinity include Freda Haffner Kettlehole, Silver Lake Fen, Anderson Prairie, and Cheever Lake.

While in NW Iowa consider the scenic route home.

A visit to the **Prairie Heritage Center**, 4931 Yellow Ave., Peterson, IA 51047-open 1-4 pm on Saturdays and Sundays (no leader/guide provided) 4.9 miles of walking trails available.

The purpose of the Prairie Heritage Center is to provide environmental education as it relates to the prairie and the county, to preserve and protect our prairie heritage, and to encourage economic development with regards to recreation and historic exploration. Every season of the year is a great one on the prairie! The Prairie Heritage Center opened its doors to the public on November 28, 2006. Over 100,000 people have visited the center since that time. They have come from all 50 states and over 26 foreign countries. It is a great place to enjoy educational and interactive displays, hike the trails, savor the wildflowers, and engage in bird and wildlife watching. Visit the Prairie Heritage Center and check out all the things to do! (Version 08/11/2024)

Thank you to the following sponsors of the 2024 Iowa Prairie Conference



To Learn About, Teach About, Enjoy, and Protect
Iowa's Prairie Heritage
www.iowaprairienetwork.org iowaprairienetworkorg@gmail.com
Like us on facebook www.facebook.com/iowaPrairieNetwork



Follow us on Instagram @iowaprairienetwork

