

# Iowa Prairie Network Newsletter

## Spring 2022

### *Bur Oak Land Trust Steps Up to Stewardship*

Submitted by Kenny Slocum

Bur Oak Land Trust has a wonderful opportunity on its hands to protect one of Iowa's most priceless commodities: a mosaic of sensitive habitats, relatively undisturbed since the pre-settlement era.

The site maintained its integrity through an interesting geographical quirk. An anabranch – a small section of stream that diverts from the main channel before joining it again downstream – isolated some 200 acres of an old family farm.

“The landowner now is in his 80s, born on the farm, lived there his whole life, and there are parts they rarely visited. It's a totally untouched property, which is pretty rare in Iowa,” says land trust Executive Director Jason Taylor.

Rare indeed. The site includes some 40 acres of pristine sand prairie. Other sections consist of remnant tallgrass prairie, wetlands, and forest, creating a complex network of habitats ripe for preservation.

That complexity drives Bur Oak Land Trust's goal to conduct inventories of the plant and animal species calling the acreage home. That goal aligns with the Land Trust's mission of advancing biodiversity in Eastern Iowa by protecting resilient landscapes and connecting people to nature.

Those goals in turn aligned beautifully with the mission of the Iowa Prairie Network to learn about, teach about, enjoy and protect Iowa's prairie heritage. For that reason, the IPN elected to make Bur Oak Land Trust the beneficiary of the winter silent auction.

Funds from the auction will go toward a botanical inventory to be conducted by Drake University's Tom Rosburg over the course of two years. The Land Trust also plans to develop an inventory of the site's herpetofauna, bats, birds, bees, beetles and mussels.

The landowner initially sought a conservation easement, but such arrangements rarely allow for the kind of management necessary to help the site thrive. Upon learning what a full donation would mean for the site's stewardship, the landowner quickly pounced on it.

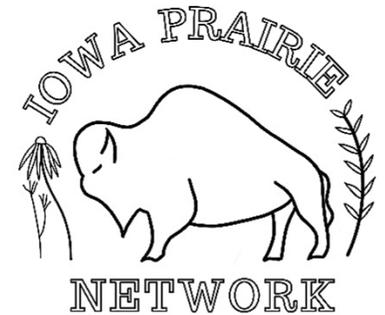
The site will not be open to the public generally, but the Land Trust plans to provide numerous opportunities for the public to share the wonder with bioblitzes and guided hikes.

When I asked Jason what caught the attention of the Land Trust, he dives into an amazing story.

“We feel blessed to have access to a ton of people who are experts in their field. We visited the site with one of our donors, a biology professor who specializes in beetles, so we're out looking for beetles, but it's cold. I managed to find just one dung beetle on an *Opuntia* (prickly pear) cactus that he didn't immediately recognize. He took it home to key it out, and it turned out to be only the second record of that species for Iowa.”

“We found just one beetle that day and it turned out to be a pretty rare species. If we really start looking, what else are we going to find?”

*Tephrosia virginiana* (Goat's Rue)  
Sand Prairie Indicator Species  
Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve  
Photo by Tom Rosburg



#### IPN Officers

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Tim Youngquist, Vice President  
Ed Sibley, Treasurer  
Laura Leben, Secretary

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Webmaster: Justin Meissen  
Newsletter Editor: Corinne Bulat

##### Finance

Chair: Cait Caughey

##### Membership

Chair: Leesa McNeil

##### Marketing

Chair: Jacob Pitzemberger



*Corydalis aurea* (Golden Smoke)  
Sand Prairie Indicator Species  
Photo by Tom Rosburg



## Update from the IPN Membership Committee

Submitted by Leesa McNeil

### IPN Board of Directors

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Tabitha Panas

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The IPN Membership Committee, consisting of Andy Asell, Dotty Zales, Pam White and Leesa McNeil, has initiated an effort to increase student membership. While IPN has an annual membership of over 220 people, we have very few student members! Student membership is free and easy to complete. Students just need to visit our website and complete the basic contact information -- <https://www.iowaprairienetwork.org/become-a-member>. As part of this initiative, the Committee has amassed a listing of 270 biology/science faculty that teach in Iowa. The faculty were contacted in early January, requesting that they share a flyer with their respective students. There are many benefits for students (and others) that become a member of Iowa Prairie Network:

- Learn more about prairies through field trips, work days, conferences, and other events
- Receive a newsletter to find out about prairies and prairie people around Iowa
- Meet prairie enthusiasts in your area and elsewhere across the state
- Work on prairie management and restoration projects
- Receive information about prairie events, conferences, and other organizations with prairie connections
- Connect with individuals seeking to hire fill various science/naturalist positions

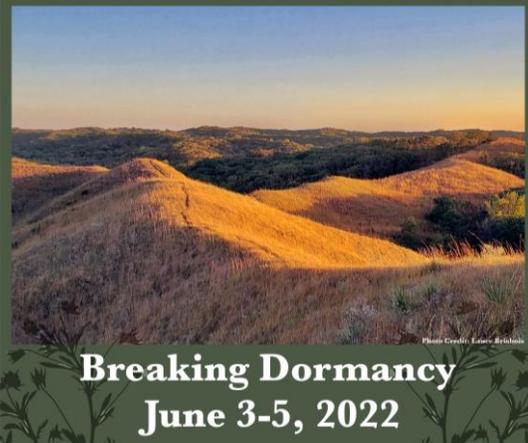
The committee requests all IPN members help bring the benefit of student membership to individuals in their respective circles.

We are excited to announce the 45<sup>th</sup> Loess Hills Prairie Seminar. Come experience a free, family-friendly weekend of hands-on learning activities and sessions with conservation partners to explore and experience the Loess Hills in Monona County, Iowa.

Free primitive camping available on-site, other local options include motels, bed-and-breakfasts, and modern camping facilities. Optional meals to

be catered and portable toilets will be available onsite. For more information: <https://www.loesshillsprairieseminar.com/> Follow Monona County Conservation Board on Facebook to stay up to date with news and announcements.

### Loess Hills Prairie Seminar



Breaking Dormancy  
June 3-5, 2022

### Find a Prairie

The IPN website now lists public prairies in all 99 Iowa counties. <https://www.iowaprairienetwork.org/find-a-prairie>



Pasque Flower  
Photo by Tabitha Panas



Wood Betony  
Photo by Corinne Bulat



Blue Eyed Grass  
Photo by Corinne Bulat



### Become a Committee Member

Our Board is currently full! We are still looking for individuals who are passionate about our endangered prairie ecosystem to join us in our mission! Add your special talent to a committee (Communications, Finance, Marketing, Newsletter or Membership). Contact Tabitha Panas ([tpanas@pheasantsforever.org](mailto:tpanas@pheasantsforever.org))

“One swallow does not make a summer, but one skein of geese, cleaving the murk of a March thaw, is the spring.” ~Aldo Leopold

## Featured IPN Connection

IPN works with a multitude of agencies and organizations to support us in our mission. We thank them for their support.



**Our mission:** Provide an exceptional learning environment that prepares students for meaningful personal lives, professional accomplishments, and responsible global citizenship. The Drake experience is distinguished by collaborative learning among students, faculty, and staff and by the integration of the liberal arts and sciences with professional preparation.

**Our inspiration:** Together we transform lives and strengthen communities.

## 2022 Winter Meeting-- Iowa Prairies: Educate, Advocate, Celebrate!

**RESCHEDULED**

**Saturday, March 19, 2022**

**9:30 am – 5:10 pm**

**Drake University Parents Hall  
2875 University Ave, Des Moines,  
IA 50311**

Due to the recent rise in Covid-19 in our community, we have made the decision to **postpone** the Winter Meeting until March 19th, 2022. We look forward to getting together again at a safer time. To register for the Iowa Prairie Network Winter Meeting, please visit our website

at <https://www.iowaprairienetwork.org/2022wintermeeting>

If you are interested in bringing an item to contribute to the silent auction benefiting the Bur Oak Land Trust's new land acquisition in Muscatine County, please email

[iowaprairienetworkorg@gmail.com](mailto:iowaprairienetworkorg@gmail.com) with a description of the item(s).

Vendors are especially encouraged to bring an item to contribute. If you or your organization are interested in reserving vendor booth space, please contact Marlene Ehersman at [marlene@iowawildlifecenter.org](mailto:marlene@iowawildlifecenter.org).

## Membership Corner

IPN has nearly 200 members who share an enthusiasm for prairies! Join the fun 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      \_\_\_\_ Family ..... \$ 30

\_\_\_\_ Individual ..... \$ 20      \_\_\_\_ Organization.....\$100

### 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”*

*You can join online with PayPal*

Don't forget to **RENEW** your membership! [www.iowaprairienetwork.org](http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org). **Thank you!**

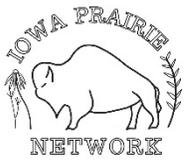
The Iowa Prairie Network is a grass-roots, volunteer organization that is dedicated to the preservation of Iowa's prairie heritage. IPN was formed in 1990 by Iowans concerned that our prairie heritage was disappearing. People needed an organization that would bring those who know about prairie together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

## Spring 2022 Events

**Please be advised:** Scheduling of events is subject to change according to CDC Coronavirus guidelines. Check the IPN Calendar for continued updates. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

### Upcoming Events – check the IPN Calendar for details, updates and more events! [www.iowaprairienetwork.org](http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org)

<b>March</b>	<b>2-3 19</b>	<b>The Wildlife Society Iowa Chapter Conference – Ames, IA Iowa Prairie Network Winter Meeting – Drake University, Des Moines, IA</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>9 30 30</b>	<b>Hike the Prairie - Prairie Heritage Center O'Brien County - Peterson, IA Iowa Native Plant Society Field Trip - Pammel State Park, Winterset, IA</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Iowa Native Plant Society Field Trip – Fowler Forest Preserve, Smithland, IA</b>



**Iowa Prairie Network, Inc.**  
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[www.iowaprairienetwork.org](http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org)

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

***Spring 2022***  
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Showy Orchid  
Brushy Creek State Recreation Area  
Photo by Corinne Bulat