



# Iowa Prairie Network Newsletter

## Summer 2016

### IPN Supports Stewardship Projects in the Loess Hills

Submitted by Mark Wilson

Through proceeds generated from the silent auction held at the 2015 winter meeting in Ankeny, IPN provided the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) with a \$6,000 donation to support a Conservation Corps Iowa (CCI) young adult field crew dedicated to stewardship projects throughout the Loess Hills Region. CCI is a non-profit AmeriCorps program that is part of the larger Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa. Conservation Corps provides hands-on environmental stewardship and service-learning opportunities to youth and young adults while accomplishing conservation, natural resource management and emergency response work.

The Iowa Prairie Network joined a host of other partners to allow for the crew of six young adults to serve in the Loess Hills from February through December. While based at Pottawattamie CCB's Hitchcock Nature Center, the crew has worked on stewardship projects throughout the region with INHF, The Nature Conservancy, Iowa DNR, Pottawattamie County Conservation, Harrison County Conservation, Mills County Conservation, Woodbury County Conservation and other private landowners who have permanently protected their land in conservation easements. An Iowa Wildlife Diversity Grant, the Loess Hills Alliance, and the USFWS also provided valuable monetary support for the crew in order to subsidize the cost that the other partners had to raise to hire the crew.

The amount of work done by the crew is staggering, having served nearly 10,000 person hours dedicated to improving the Loess Hills ecosystem. Nearly 1,000 acres have been improved through exotic and invasive species management. The crew assisted with 1,500 acres of prescribed fire while also improving or building almost 8,000 feet of firebreaks. They also cleared cedar trees and other vegetation from 244 acres.

During the annual Loess Hills Prairie Seminar the crew members led and worked with the volunteers at the G.R.A.S.S. (Great Race Against Shade and Shrubs) near Turin, IA to remove eastern red cedar trees from a recently acquired Iowa DNR management area.

Without the assistance of the IPN and its members this stewardship would not have been possible. The experience gained and education provided to these six young adults by all the partners involved would not have occurred. In short, to paraphrase the Conservation Corps motto, IPN was able to restore resources and change lives this past year.



#### IPN Committees

##### Communications

Chair: Kali Downs

Newsletter Subcommittee

Editor: Tenlea Turner

##### Events

Chair: Pam White

##### Finance

Chair: Joyce Horstein

\$10,388.80 (07/2016)

##### Membership

Chair: Leesa McNeil



Photos courtesy of Mark Wilson





## Butterflies: Beyond Monarchs

Submitted by Tenlea Turner

As you know...Over the last couple of decades the Monarch butterfly has experienced a significant decline in population. There are currently a wide variety of Conservation Programs conducting community outreach to educate the public on the plight of the monarch and the need to conserve and restore natural habitat for their benefit.

These organizations are enlisting Citizen Scientists to participate in monitoring efforts and data collection, as well as providing guidance and assistance with establishing natural areas, large and small, that provide stepping stones of habitat along migration corridors.

Your natural area should include a variety of species of grasses as well as flowering plants that are native to the local ecosystem. That diversity will ensure that host plants and nectaring plants are available throughout their lifecycle and migration period.

Monarchs are what is known as an Ambassador, or Flagship species. Most people recognize it and appreciate the beauty they add to the natural landscape. So when they hear its existence might be threatened, they want to step in and take action. The attention toward the monarch has a trickle-down effect for all pollinators.

According to the IADNR list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), there are 131 reported species of butterflies in Iowa. Forty-two of those are fairly common and widespread and 30 are SGCN, meaning that they show a noticeable decline in population. We have 1 Federally Threatened species (Dakota skipper), and 1 Federally Endangered (Poweshiek skipper). Loss of habitat is considered to be the primary cause of these declining numbers. Improving and expanding quality habitat for monarchs benefits all butterflies and other pollinators. Check out the IPN website for more information on how you can help with habitat restoration.



## IPN Board of Directors

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## Membership Corner

IPN has 150 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

### 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”*



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



IPN is an official partner of Plant.Grow.Fly., the Blank Park Zoo's initiative to promote habitat for our native pollinators. You can help by registering your backyard pollinator garden or prairie at [www.plantgrowfly.org](http://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.

## 2016 Events

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

### August

**6 - IPN Annual Membership Meeting and Prairie Event** - Hosted by Region 2 at Floyd County Fossil and Prairie Park, Rockford, IA  
**6 - Bison Day** - Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Prairie City, IA

### September

**10 - Monarch Madness** - Neal Smith NWR  
**11 - 17 - Iowa Prairie Heritage Week** - Location: All Over Iowa!  
**18 - Monarch Festival** - Blank Park Zoo, Des Moines, IA

### October

**5-6 - Heartland Native Plant Summit** – Lauritzen Gardens, Omaha, NE  
**8 - Ding Darling Day** – Neal Smith NWR stewardship day



Seed collecting at Marietta Sand Prairie in Marshall County



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