

# Iowa Prairie Network Newsletter - Fall 2021



Photo by Tenlea Turner

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## *We Stayed Busy*

Submitted by Tenlea Turner

Slowly but surely, step by step we are inching our way back to normal. After more than a year, we are emerging from the isolation of home, reuniting with family, going to movies and restaurants, and yes, visiting our favorite prairies with friends. We managed to work in a few prairie walks during the shutdown with limited attendance, according to CDC guidelines, of course. Needless to say we are eager to get back out to the prairies and events we have missed so much.

It's hard to do what we do without person-to-person contact, but we have stayed busy. The newsletter has continued, uninterrupted, providing you with event information and prairie-related articles.

We worked on improving our new website. Now you can locate public prairies in all 99 Iowa counties. We added an IPN History page, and an introduction to each of our Board members with biographies and photos. We are adding recordings of virtual meetings, beginning with the 2021 Winter meeting so that you can watch them at your convenience. The Board Member Application is now available online which you can complete whether you are self-nominated or recommended by someone else.

We have also completed a number of administrative tasks to improve the function of our organization. We revised the IPN Region Map; compiled a list of media contacts by region for event announcements; developed an introductory packet for new board members; assisted with planning of the 2020 North America Prairie Conference (which was ultimately cancelled); and hosted the 2021 Iowa Prairie Conference.

We are excited by the prospect of seeing many of you at our upcoming events. Check out the new additions to our website and keep your eye on our calendar of events. We invite you to become a member, join our Board, or one of our committees, but most of all - ***Come join us on the prairie!***

[www.iowaprairienetwork.org](http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org)



### **IPN Officers**

Michelle Biodrowski, President  
Jacob Pitzenberger, Vice President  
Ed Sibley, Treasurer  
Laura Leben, Interim Secretary

### **Committees**

#### Communications

Chair: Ben Maas

Webmaster: Cory Pritchard

Newsletter Editor: Tenlea Turner

#### Finance

Chair: Cait Caughey

#### Membership

Chair: Leesa McNeil

#### Marketing

Chair: Jacob Pitzenberger



## *Getting to Know You*

**Tabitha Panas** is originally from Omaha and graduated from UNO in 2018 with a degree in Environmental Science. She has always had a great appreciation and deep curiosity for nature – even while growing up in the city. Neale Woods in North Omaha always offered a welcomed escape into the quiet peace of a trail in a forest. Later as an intern with Fontenelle Forest, she was able to help with management - cutting honeysuckle, sweet clover, and participating on her first prescribed burn. Last year she worked on a field crew with the Conservation Corps of Iowa, doing habitat restoration in the Loess Hills. Currently, Tabitha is a Farm Bill Biologist with Pheasants Forever, working out of Denison, IA. She helps landowners and producers achieve their habitat goals on private lands while working in partnership with NRCS and the DNR. Tabitha loves her job and is grateful to be where she is. In her free time she enjoys, hiking, kayaking, bird watching, cutting cedars, spending time with her “obnoxious” family, gardening, tending to her dogs and her quail, cooking, and spending time in prairies, of course.

Get to know all of the IPN Board members on our website [www.iowaprairienetwork.org](http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org)

# Prairie Highlight

Photo by Tenlea Turner

## ***Lawns, Leaves, Bees, and More***

Submitted by Tenlea Turner

Stop! Wait a minute. Before you commence your rituals of fall yard clean-up activities remember this – you are destroying homes. We have been programmed for decades to remove fallen leaves and dead plants from our yards to achieve that pristine, well-manicured, aesthetically pleasing appearance that makes us the envy of the neighborhood. To you it may be “yard waste,” but to countless pollinators, invertebrates, and other wildlife, it’s their winter home – providing essential shelter, food, and nesting materials.

Here are a few things to consider before you rake, blow, cut, and bag:

- ✦ **Lawns:** Plant local native plant species whenever possible. Avoid the use of pesticides, herbicides, and other chemical treatments. Rely more on nature and less on life support.
- ✦ **Leaves:** A multitude of creatures rely on leaf litter for survival; eggs, caterpillars, cocoons, and adults find shelter, while birds and mammals find food. It’s nature’s mulch. Leaf litter acts as a natural weed suppressant, insulation from the cold, retaining moisture and soil-enriching nutrients. If you feel compelled to rake them up, move them to another place in the garden or yard to reap the benefits elsewhere.
- ✦ **Bees:** Most native bee species burrow into ground but some will winter in hollow plant stems.
- ✦ **And more:** Leave dried plant stems standing, with or without seed heads. Birds benefit from the seeds, and bees and other insects can nest in the stems.
  - ✦ Save time – don’t squander your precious time on raking and bagging yard debris – there are so many fun things you could be doing instead.
  - ✦ Reduce waste – A 2017 Iowa DNR report stated that yard waste accounts for 10% of landfill material. Yard waste does not decompose efficiently when covered with layers of trash.
  - ✦ Reduce Pollution – leaf blowers contribute to both air and noise pollution, not to mention the fuel it takes to haul the debris away.

For more information on this important topic go to:

- <https://xerces.org/blog/leave-the-leaves>
- <https://www.nwf.org/Home/Latest-News/Press-Releases/2019/09-25-19-Leave-the-Leaves>
- [https://blog.nwf.org/2013/11/6-excuses-to-avoid-yard-work-this-fall/?\\_ga](https://blog.nwf.org/2013/11/6-excuses-to-avoid-yard-work-this-fall/?_ga)
- <https://thegoodhuman.com/10-reasons-you-dont-need-a-grass-lawn>

*Don't waste the "waste." Leave the leaves.*



### **Join our Board or become a Committee Member**

We are looking for individuals who are passionate about our endangered prairie ecosystem to join us in our mission! Join our Board of Directors or add your special talent to a committee (Communications, Finance, Marketing, or Membership).

Contact Michelle Biodrowski (biodrowski13@gmail.com)

### **IPN Board of Directors**

#### **Region 1**

Ben Maas

Tabitha Panas

#### **Region 2**

*Vacant*

Sarah Nizzi

#### **Region 3**

Tim Youngquist

Justin Meissen

#### **Region 4**

*Vacant*

*Vacant*

#### **Region 5**

Lance Brisbois

Cait Caughey

#### **Region 6**

Tenlea Turner

Jacob Pitzenberger

#### **Region 7**

Pam White

Ray Hamilton

#### **At Large**

Jon Judson

Michelle Biodrowski

Corinne Bulat

Laura Leben

Derek Miner

Pete Eyheralde

### ***Find a Prairie***

The IPN website now lists public prairies in all 99 Iowa counties.

<https://www.iowaprairienetwork.org/find-a-prairie>

*“If you, too, can come to love this land as our ancestors did, all the problems of the world will fall away like autumn leaves in the wind.” ~Tony Ten Fingers (Wanbli Nata’u) Oglala Lakota*

### Featured IPN Connection

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



*"The Iowa Native Plant Society is a forum for plant enthusiasts, gardeners, and professional botanists to exchange ideas and information, and to work together to:*

- encourage conservation and ethical use of Iowa's plants
- promote education about Iowa's plants, their habitats and cultural habits, and the preservation of these plants and their environment
- appreciate and enjoy Iowa's native flora."



Native plants Eddyville Dunes Sand Prairie  
Photo by Tenlea Turner

### Membership Corner

IPN has nearly 200 members that 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                       Organizations.....\$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***

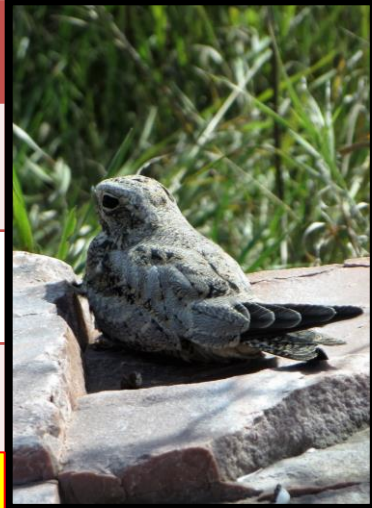
Don't forget to **RENEW** your membership! [www.iowaprairienetwork.org](http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org). **Thank you!**

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.

## Fall 2021 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.

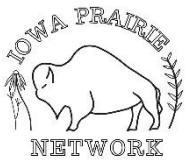
Upcoming Events – check the IPN Calendar for details, updates and more events! <a href="http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org">www.iowaprairienetwork.org</a>		
<b>September</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>Prairie Walk</b> - Codfish Hollow Hill Prairie, Maquoketa. Contact 563-652-3783
<b>October</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Iowa TWS Fall Meeting</b> – Iowa Chapter of The Wildlife Society hosted by Iowa DNR Prairie Resource Center <a href="http://www.iowatws.wildapricot.org">www.iowatws.wildapricot.org</a>
<b>November</b>	<b>TBD</b>	Look for event information at <a href="http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org">www.iowaprairienetwork.org</a>



Common Nighthawk  
Photo by Tenlea Turner

**IPN Annual Meeting – August 21, 2021**  
Check the IPN Calendar for details.

Did you miss the IPN 2021 Winter Meeting? View it now on our website. [www.iowaprairienetwork.org](http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org)



**Iowa Prairie Network, Inc.**  
4015 Sergeant Rd.  
Sioux City, IA 51106-4013  
[iowaprairienetworkorg@gmail.com](mailto:iowaprairienetworkorg@gmail.com)  
[www.iowaprairienetwork.org](http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org)

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

## *FALL 2021*

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