



UPCOMING EVENTS

Snow Trillium Walk April 3, 2010

SIOSA will be hosting its annual snow trillium walk at 10:00 AM at Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation's Bishop Woods. Refer to the page 3 for more information.

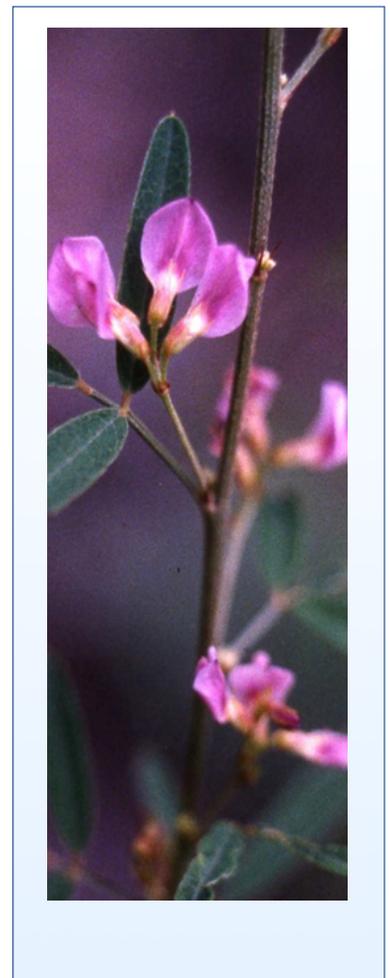
Iowa Academy of Science April 16-17, 2010

The Iowa Academy of Science will be holding their annual meeting April 16-17 at Graceland University in Lamoni. The meeting will include lectures and a field trip to Slip Bluff Park.

SIOSA Annual Meeting June 26, 2010

SIOSA will be hosting its annual meeting from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM at Kobville Park located approximately 4 miles west of Garden Grove.

SIOSA programs and activities are open to any person regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.



SIOSA Update

John Orvis, SIOSA President



John and Sharon Orvis

It was a long, cold winter in southern Iowa. They tell me that it was the worst year for doing maple syrup in recent history. It stayed cold without any warm/cold cycles until early March so the sap was late. We tried anyway but didn't get much. The snow also stayed late this year so we didn't get the burning done in February and March that we had planned. This has prevented us from spreading the native seed we were able to harvest last fall.

On the bright side, we all survived, it's warmed up, many of the birds are back, and SIOSA is still going strong.

Work is being continued on the construction of a new SIOSA website. We hope the site will provide our membership updated information and a way of staying better connected with the group. A current membership database has also been developed to help us better track our members.

At our March meeting, the board of directors voted to hold the SIOSA 2010 Annual Meeting on June 26th at Kobville Park. The park is located approximately 4 miles west of Garden Grove on county highway J-20. The day will include a tour of restoration efforts on a native prairie and savanna site located at the park, a catered meal, and SIOSA's annual meeting.

Snow Trillium-*Trillium nivale*

The trillium is among a group of flowers that bloom for a very short period of time in early Spring-the *ephemerals*. Populations of Snow Trillium are in serious decline-it is threatened or endangered in several states.

The preference is filtered sunlight during the spring (before the trees leave out), and light shade during the summer. The soil should be mesic to dry, and loamy or rocky with a shallow layer of decaying leaves. There should not be too much competition from other ground layer plants during the late spring or the summer. The foliage withers away by the end of summer. (Source: <http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info>)

The Southern Iowa Oak Savanna Alliance is sponsoring a wildflower walk at 10:00 AM, Saturday, April 3. Decatur County is fortunate to have a sizeable colony of Snow Trillium in a former limestone quarry south of Decatur. Populations of Snow Trillium, a rare spring ephemeral, are in serious decline. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about the wildflowers and rare woodland habitats of Decatur County.

The site known as Bishop Woods is owned by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. Plans are in place to restore oak savanna, prairie and woodland habitats on the property. Gregg Pattison, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service private lands biologist will be on hand to discuss restoration plans and opportunities for landowners to manage habitat on their properties.

Directions: From Highway 2, east of I-35 in Decatur County, take 4th Street south for 0.9 miles. Keeping right at the next intersection, continue on Terre Haute Road for another 2.7 miles. On the right, you will see an old cemetery. We will meet here.



Snow Trillium-*Trillium Nivale*

Update on the Oak Woodland and Savanna Restoration Project, Stephens State Forest Bird Conservation Area

Jessica Flatt, Area Forester
Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Stephens State Forest

In January 2010, the Iowa DNR Bureau of Forestry received word that the oak woodland and savanna restoration grant that was discussed in the previous newsletter did not receive funding. The many partners involved in the grant process would still like to see the project goals achieved so other funding options and project alternatives were discussed at a meeting held on March 10, 2010, in Chariton.

All parties decided a key initial step in the process is the creation of a demonstration site on public ground. The demonstration area will be used to illustrate the restoration process to potential and interested private landowners and to educate the public on the benefits of active forest management. The Iowa DNR Bureau of Forestry is coordinating with the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) to fund and contract savanna restoration, prescribed burning and timber stand improvement on seventy-one acres of Stephens State Forest within the Bird Conservation Area (BCA). Signage will be used throughout the restoration process and educational materials will be created that explain the land management techniques being implemented. Signage will be funded through SIOSA. Restoration activities on public land will begin this fall.

Iowa DNR Forestry, Iowa DNR Wildlife, SIOSA, NWTF, and US Fish & Wildlife Service are still discussing ways to accomplish the many objectives of the project. To complete the private land outreach and restoration component, a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant will be applied for. Pre-proposals for that grant are due in mid-April. A separate grant was awarded through the Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program; funding from this grant will focus on direct mailings and landowner outreach. Although the proposed project will not be completed as originally designed, all of the stakeholders and partners are committed to the overarching goals: creating a demonstration area on public ground, reaching out to private landowners, and advocating oak ecosystem improvement in southern Iowa on public and private land.

Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program Dedicates New BCA in Decatur County

Gregg Pattison, Private Land Biologist
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

A new Bird Conservation Area (BCA) was dedicated in the northwest portion of Decatur County around the Sand Creek and Dekalb Wildlife Management Areas. The Sand Creek Woodland./Savanna BCA will emphasize woodland and savanna habitats but will support a wide array of bird species. This BCA will fit well into the Iowa Wildlife Action Plan and should provide tools to help manage quality habitat for savanna and woodland species such as the red-headed woodpecker, northern mockingbird, loggerhead shrike, Bell's vireo, long-eared owl, Swainson's hawk and many more species including game species such as the bobwhite quail and wild turkey.



Sand Creek Woodland/Savanna BCA
dedication ceremony

Not only does this area have high potential for savanna and woodland species, but the area also has a very high proportion of grasslands that will benefit from good savanna and woodland management activities.

The model for a BCA landscape is fairly simple, but does require a core area of the desired habitat to be permanently protected by public ownership or conservation easement. The minimum size for a BCA is 10,000 acres of which a minimum of 25% of the area must be high quality habitat of the desired suite of bird species. For example, grassland

BCAs must have at least 25% of the landscape as high quality grassland habitat. This can include high quality areas that are currently degraded, but restorable. In addition, the BCA must have at least 20% of the area in permanent protection with a core area of 2,000 acres of high quality habitat. The land surrounding the core area should have several small high quality habitat units that are around 100 acres or more in size. The remaining land in the BCA should be “neutral” in how it affects bird life within the high quality areas. This matrix of a large core of

quality habitat and surrounding small units of quality habitat should create an ideal situation for a suite of bird species.

BCAs can also have a very good impact on local economies. The US Fish & Wildlife Service estimated over \$300 million were spent on wildlife observation in Iowa in 2006. Ecotourism and bird watching are very popular activities and with the new Sand Creek BCA, there will be a series of BCAs in South Central Iowa from Ringgold County northeast to Lucas County. The BCA will provide a very attractive draw for bird enthusiasts looking for new areas to observe wildlife.

SIOSA Purchases New Sprayer Unit

SIOSA recently purchased a new Northern Tool slide-in sprayer unit to be used for prescribed burning. The new unit features a 200 gallon tank and a high pressure water pump. It also is equipped with an automatic hose reel and 300 feet of hose which makes it an ideal firefighting tool.

The Decatur County Conservation Board has already used the new equipment for several prescribed fires on their public areas. “The new unit worked very well and will be a valuable tool for future burns,” stated Park Ranger Rich Erke.

The slide-in sprayer unit is being housed at the Decatur County Conservation Board office and is available to current due paying SIOSA members and partners. A \$100 deposit is required when borrowing the equipment and will be refunded when the sprayer is returned barring any damages.



New Northern Tool slide-in sprayer unit.

Help Savanna Habitat Restoration by joining SIOSA (Southern Iowa Oak Savanna Alliance)

Members receive quarterly newsletters and can participate in activities throughout the year relating to oak savannas.

Annual membership rates:

\$10 Student Member
\$25 Savanna Friend
\$100 Supporting Member
\$250 Sustaining Member
\$500 Savanna Steward

Name: _____

Address:

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Email address:

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William and Sibylla Brown-Timberhill Savanna

SIOSA newsletters are published quarterly. Submissions to the newsletter should be sent to the editor:

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