



## UPCOMING EVENTS

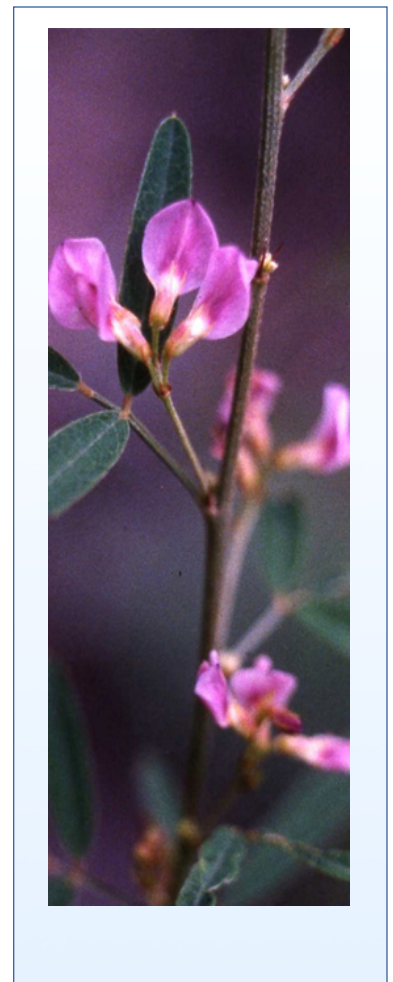
### **SIOSA Annual Meeting** June 26, 2010

SIOSA will be hosting its annual meeting, entitled “Discovering Diverse Habitats,” from 10:00 AM-2 PM at Kobville Park. The day will include a tour and discussion of the park, a catered lunch, and SIOSA’s annual meeting. Refer to the article on page 5 for additional information.

### **South Central Iowa Strutters Annual Banquet** August 26, 2010

The South Central Iowa Strutters chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation will be hosting its annual banquet on Thursday, August 26 at the Grand River Community Center. Doors will open at 5:30 PM with a meal being served at 7:00 PM. The evening will include an auction, raffle, and games. For more information or to purchase banquet tickets contact Dustin Eighmy at 641-414-8415.

*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

Summer is upon us and most of the birds are back, although there seems to be fewer of them. The winter must have been hard on the quail as we haven't seen or heard any since late February. The honey bees seem to be in short supply as well. I only noticed a few on the flowers when the fruit trees bloomed and of our three honey trees only one has a few bees hanging around.

We did get some good dry days in late March and April which allowed us to complete our burning and spread the native seed we collected last fall. Hopefully, we will have more success with that than with our garden!

We are looking forward to our annual meeting at Kobville Park on June 26. One topic we will be discussing is how to recognize a highly restorable but degraded savanna. When we first purchased our land, we knew very little about native prairie and savanna plants and absolutely nothing about restoration them. We learned a great deal from attending field days like this and listening to experts on the subject.

Reading books is also a wonderful way to gain a better understanding of prairies and savannas. If you are interested in reading more on the subject, I would recommend "The Tallgrass Restoration Handbook for Prairies, Savannas, and Woodlands" and "Miracle Under the Oaks." They should both be available at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) or [AbeBooks.com](http://AbeBooks.com).

## Kobville Park: Past, Present, and Future

Richard Erke, Director  
Decatur County Conservation Board

In 1857, Lewis and Anna Kob came to Decatur County in an ox drawn wagon from Indiana. A few years later in 1863, they purchased land in Franklin and Center townships. Lewis Kob wrote to friends in Indiana describing his new home as “not only the paradise of Iowa, but paradise of the world. It is the most beautiful place that I ever saw.”

Prior to his death in 1911, Kob gave each of his daughters 40 acres of land. His eldest daughter, Sidney Kob and her husband, Samuel Duffield, received the 40 acres that is now Kobville County Park. The Decatur County Conservation Board was approached by the heirs of Sidney and Samuel in 1986 with the idea of donating the land and naming it Kobville Park. The park was officially accepted by the county conservation board in early 1987 and later that year an access road, parking area, and picnic shelter were built. Each year the descendants of Sidney and Samuel meet at the park to hold their family reunion.



Old home of Sidney and Samuel Duffield.

When the conservation board acquired the property, the old home of the Duffield’s was still standing (somewhat) near the site of the picnic shelter. Some of the old out buildings were still there as well, but unusable. The buildings were said to have been the original stables for horses that were used on the stagecoach road that ran through this property, then called Kobville. The stagecoach road was later converted to the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy railroad line and is still recognizable running east and west dissecting the park into two halves.

Also dissecting the property from east to west is Cobbville Creek. The creek provides a natural break between the two very distinct ecosystems that lay on each side of the it.



Native savanna located at  
Kobville Park.

On the south side of the creek, is what is thought to be an original savanna. Many of the trees in this area are 300 plus years old and include species such as: oak, hackberry, shagbark hickory, walnut, and others. It is believed that this area may have never been logged and walking through it is like stepping back into time.

To the north of the creek, native prairie can be found. The Duffield heirs said this area was called the “lapdog prairie” by their ancestors. It has not been determined if the prairie has been plowed or not.

The Decatur County Conservation Board is presently working with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Private Lands Office to restore the savanna and prairie in the park. Midwest Land Restoration (a private contractor) was hired in 2009 to cut and remove invasive species and the conservation board followed this with a prescribed fire. The conservation board plans to continually burn the area to maintain the control of the invasive species.

Considering the age of the trees and the history of the area, it will be exciting to see what types of vegetation will be stimulated by fire. Both the savanna and prairie have enormous potential!



Restored native prairie found on  
north end of Kobville Park.

## **Kobville Park: Discovering Diverse Habitats**

Whether on public land or on your own back forty, many unique and rare habitats often go unnoticed or unappreciated. SIOSA will be hosting a field day at Kobville Park in rural Decatur County on June 26 to help people identify hidden treasures they may have on public or private areas.

Guided hikes and discussion will take place with members of SIOSA, the Decatur County Conservation Board, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. This small park has remnant native prairies, oak savanna, floodplain woodlands, and wetlands that team with diverse plants and wildlife species. The field day will help you appreciate unique habitats across Iowa and may help you make decisions about habitat management on your property.

### **Kobville Park Field Day Agenda**

- 10:00-10:30**      **Orientation to Kobville Park**  
**Updates on SIOSA activities**
  
- 10:30-Noon**      **Hiking tour of park**  
**Management discussion of various habitats**
  
- Noon-1:00**      **Lunch**  
**Discussion of programs available to landowners**
  
- 1:00-2:00**      **SIOSA annual meeting (optional)**

**Registration fee is \$10 and includes lunch**  
**OR**  
**Become a SIOSA member and the registration**  
**& meal are free!!**

Directions from Leon: 4 miles north on Highway 69 and 3 miles east on J20, south side of road  
 Directions from I-35: 7 miles east on J20 (Exit 18), south side of road

## Assistance Available to Control *Sericea Lespedeza* In Decatur County

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

Once again, there is another invasive plant that has established itself in Decatur County. *Sericea lespedeza* (*Lespedeza cuneata*), or Chinese bush clover, is an introduced perennial legume native to eastern Asia. It is recognized for its tolerance of drought, acidity, and shallow soils of low fertility. It does best on clay and loamy soils that are deep, fertile, and well drained, but will also grow on poor sites. It has few insect and disease problems. *Sericea lespedeza*'s ability to thrive under a variety of conditions and its tendency to crowd out more palatable forages are among the reasons it has been declared a noxious weed in Kansas and may be considered as a noxious weed in Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma.



*Sericea lespedeza*  
(*Lespedeza cuneata*)

*Sericea* continues to spread into Iowa. Reports from last summer's Iowa Prairie Conference show that the plant has now spread to the very northeast corner of Iowa and can be found at Effigy Mounds National Monument in Allamakee County. Several other accounts of the species were shared across central Iowa. Although the species is a target for most conservationists, it is a relatively unknown problem to most Iowans. *Sericea* will quickly move into grassland and disturbed areas and within a couple years produce a monoculture that will displace native plants.

*Sericea* is of special concern to us in southern Iowa where the populations are very high with some areas being completely infested with the plant. It is a particular problem in areas where we are restoring oak savanna and native prairie habitats. By opening the woodlands,

we are providing an opening for *Sericea* and we need to be on top of any potential invasions into the newly restored acres. In many cases, high quality oak savanna remnants have populations of the plant adjacent to or on the restoration sites. These infestations need to be controlled in order to have a high quality restoration. Therefore, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and

the Decatur County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will partner to combat Sericea in Decatur County in a pilot program to find best management practices to control Sericea.

Through a cooperative agreement, landowners in Decatur County can sign up for assistance with controlling Sericea on their property through the Decatur County SWCD. Sites will be visited by a biologist from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to verify the infestation and develop a control plan. With an approved plan, the landowner will be eligible for cost share to help with the cost of controlling the problem. Once the treatments are complete, the landowner will be reimbursed by the Decatur County SWCD.

Sericea has been a problem for several years in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri. Not only has it caused problems for native habitats, but is also a major concern for cattle producers. Sericea will invade pastures and displace grasses, reducing productivity of pastureland. In early growth stages, Sericea can be a good food source for cattle, but it quickly becomes unpalatable and has a negative impact on pasture productivity. Sericea should be a concern for everyone and action needs to be taken quickly to help control the spread of the species.

## 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:

Phone:

Email address:

Send completed form with check or money order payable to SIOSA to:

SIOSA  
c/o Dick Hillyard  
21654 295th Ave  
Leon, IA 50144



## SIOSA OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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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:

Mark Erke at [SIOSA@me.com](mailto:SIOSA@me.com)