

Iowa Prairie Heritage Week Educational Walks and Talks in Sioux City

Governor Culver has proclaimed the first full week in September 2009 to be Iowa Prairie Heritage Week. Local communities are encouraged to mark this week with events to help introduce people to Iowa's prairies.

There will be several talks and walks throughout the week of September 6-12. The rich activities planned are family (child) friendly unless otherwise noted, and are held in several different locations in Sioux City.

All activities are free and open to the public. No reservations are needed. Principals, please share this information with teachers, and teachers with students and their families.

The Kick-off Event is Thursday evening, September 3. The Loess Hills Audubon Society will hold a potluck at 6pm (optional) and program at **7pm** at the **Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center**. Detailed **information about all of the Iowa Prairie Heritage Week programs** will be provided, and **Kevin Pape** of the Iowa DNR will share his experience in managing the **Prairies at Stone State Park**.

Sunday, September 6, features a talk and a walk at Briar Cliff University. **Thomas Bruegger**, former director of the Monona County Conservation Board, will share a slide program packed with interesting information about the **Loess Hills and Prairies** at **3pm** at the **Assisi Room within the St. Francis Center at Briar Cliff**.

Also on September 6, following the program, **Dr. Brian Hazlett** will lead a walk at **Sioux City Prairie** at **4pm**. Dr. Hazlett is a Professor of Biology and also Director of the Environmental Studies Department and the new Prairie Studies Center at Briar Cliff. It is possible to attend either the talk or walk or both. The location for Mr. Bruegger's talk is near the west parking lot where the prairie walk will begin. These programs are sponsored by the Briar Cliff University Prairie Studies Center.

On Tuesday, September 8, **Eric Robley** of The Nature Conservancy of Iowa will show a video and tell about the release of **Bison at Broken Kettle Grasslands** in Plymouth County. He'll certainly have some photos of the new calves, too. This program at **7pm** will be offered in the **Gleeson Room at the Wilbur Aalfs Library**.

On Wednesday evening, September 9, at 6:15pm Dianne Blankenship, of Iowa Prairie Network and Woodbury County Conservation Foundation, will lead a prairie walk at **Riverside Bluffs**. Drive all the way north and then east in **Kirk Hansen Park** and meet at the parking lot at the foot of the hill. Kirk Hansen Park is located off of West 19th Street near Riverside Boulevard.

Thursday, September 10, offers both a walk and a talk. **Woodbury County Conservation** naturalists will lead a **Monarch Butterfly Tagging** activity beginning on the **western edge of Sioux City Prairie** at **5pm**. Meet at the gate to the prairie along **Talbot Road**. All ages are encouraged to attend this important and fun event. Monarch butterflies will be tagged during their annual fall migration to Mexico.

The talk also on September 10 welcomes a return to Sioux City of prize-winning author, **John T. Price**, Jefferis Endowed Chair of the English Department at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He will read from his prairie writings at **7pm** at **Meis Auditorium within Heelan Hall at Briar Cliff University**. He will also have books with him and will do book signing. This is sponsored by both the Briar Cliff English Department and the Prairie Studies Center. This talk is the only activity all week that is more appropriate for older students and adults (rather than all ages including children).

On Saturday morning, September 12, the grand finale of the week will be at **Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center** at **10am**. **Dr. William Heyborne** of Morningside College will bring a collection of his **Live Creepy Crawly (and Cuddly) Critters**. This program for all ages features live critters found in and near prairies. Dr. Heyborne was honored in 2009 as Faculty Person of the Year by students at Morningside College where he is an Assistant Professor of Biology. Following the program, all are encouraged to visit the exhibits, walk the Nature Center trails, and visit Stone State Park prairies.

For all walks please wear sturdy walking shoes and dress for the outdoors. Outdoor activities are subject to cancellation in the case of bad weather.

For more information contact:

Dianne Blankenship bennaid@hotmail.com

Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center 712-258-0838

These events are also on the calendar at: <http://www.woodburyparks.com/>

Summarized

Sept. 6 - 3pm Talk - Tom Bruegger on Loess Hill Prairies at the Assisi Room within the St. Francis Center at Briar Cliff University

Sept. 6 - 4pm Walk - Brian Hazlett at Sioux City Prairie at Briar Cliff west parking lot

Sept. 8 - 7pm - Talk - TNC's Eric Robley - Bison at Broken Kettle! at Wilbur Aalfs Library

Sept. 9 - 6:15pm -Walk - Riverside Bluffs - Kirk Hansen Park - Dianne Blankenship

Sept. 10 - 5pm - Walk - Monarch Tagging at Talbot Rd. entrance to Sioux City Prairie

Sept. 10 - 7pm - Talk - John T. Price - reading and book signing at Meis Auditorium within Heelan Hall at Briar Cliff University

Sept. 12 - 10am - Talk - Bill Heyborne - Live Prairie Critters at Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center **11am -Walk** - Explore the Nature Center exhibits and trails and Stone Park prairie on your own.