

Fire Effects Workshop

Exploring the Implications of an Annual Autumnal Fire Regime

Saturday, June 28, 2014, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Hitchcock Nature Center, Honey Creek, Iowa

Hitchcock Nature Center is a 1,270 acre preserve located in the globally significant Loess Hills landform.

Much consideration has been given to the impact of fire management at this site in southwest Iowa. From 1998-2010, units were burned every 3 to 5 years to distribute fire across the landscape and provide un-burned refugia. **Since 2010, most of the lands have been burned annually in the fall.** Efforts are made to burn the remnant and reconstructed grasslands after the first killing frost and under mild conditions. The woodlands are burned after the oak leaves drop and under conditions that are more volatile. Anecdotal observations indicate fires are creating a diverse mosaic unlike that resulting from the previous regime. Patchiness, and widely varying degrees of fire intensity, create refugia representing a broader range of impacts than simple burned or unburned treatments.

The fire effects workshop is an opportunity to engage people of varying perspectives and experience and observe and discuss impacts of this prescribed fire regime in an informal setting. For most of the day, we will be joined by two ecologists who have been instrumental in shaping the restoration philosophy at Hitchcock Nature Center. Please consider joining us to experience this Loess Hills treasure, learn about changes in prescribed fire management over time, observe the effects of the management decisions, and contribute to a healthy colloquium.



Workshop Goals

1. Observe a unique site managed with annual autumnal fire
2. Learn about **monitoring** plant and insect communities
3. Observe **key species** of plants and insects of the Loess Hills
4. Learn from the site manager's experience **implementing** fall burns
5. Share diverse perspectives and engage in a constructive and critical dialogue



www.tposfirescience.org



www.pottcoconservation.com

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Space is limited!

To foster a highly-interactive environment, we are limiting group size to 30 individuals. Demand for workshops is typically high, so please register early to secure your spot. **Registration closes Wednesday, June 20.**

How do I join?

To register, please complete our on-line form at:

www.tposfirescience.org/workshop-registration

How much does the event cost?

The cost of the workshop is \$25, **payable at the door** by cash, check or credit card. The workshop is co-sponsored by the Tallgrass Prairie and Oak Savanna Fire Science Consortium, and lunch is generously provided by The Loess Hills Fire Learning Network.

Contact

Craig Maier, Coordinator, Tallgrass Prairie and Oak Savanna Fire Science Consortium

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Instructors

Laura Rericha

Laura is a wildlife biologist with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Illinois, and a Research Associate with the Conservation Research Institute. She is an expert in the fields of ornithology, botany, and invertebrate ecology. Since 2010, Laura has been inventorying certain guilds of invertebrates at HNC, particularly those that have intimate relationships with the plants or soils found here. She has focused on bees and ants, and is specifically tuned into their habits and relationships with the flora at this unique location. **To date, she has identified 115 species of native bees at HNC and discovered numerous invertebrate species not previously recorded in Iowa.**

Dr. Gerould Wilhelm

Dr. Wilhelm is a ecologist and botanist who may be best known for co-authoring *Plants of the Chicago Region* with the late Floyd Swink. He is also noted for his development of the Floristic Quality Assessment – a methodology for gauging floristic habitat quality. **As a consultant for HNC, Jerry has demonstrated a remarkable ability to understand and relate the complexity of our natural world through hydrology, soils, botany, invertebrates, human culture, and physics.**

Since 2010, Jerry has been working with Laura, to study the biodiversity at HNC. Jerry is helping the stewardship staff at HNC appreciate and understand the complex relationships and interactions within our natural areas.

About the host site: Hitchcock Nature Center

In 1991, the Pottawattamie County Conservation Board received assistance from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and Iowa's Resource Enhancement and Protection program to acquire 508 acres. The land included the former YMCA Camp Hitchcock and had been slated for development as a landfill.

Early ecological restoration efforts focused on 60 acres heavily impacted by bulldozing for the landfill and included planting trees and native grasses. In 1998, interest in restoring natural

areas increased, and for several years stewardship efforts were carried out as time allowed. In 2006, a more focused restoration effort was initiated. Today, over 1,200 acres are protected.

HNC is open every day of the year for hiking, camping, picnicking, bird watching, snow sledding, star gazing, or simply enjoying nature.