

Stewardship Resource

Directory

provided to you by the



The Loess Hills Alliance was formed in 1998 through legislative action that was requested by concerned citizens for the well-being of the landform in Iowa.

The organization is governed by a 28 member board of directors. Membership is voluntary and participation is encouraged by anyone interested.

The mission of the Loess Hills Alliance as defined by its membership is to "...protect the natural and cultural resources of the Loess Hills while ensuring economic viability and private property rights through the creation of a common vision for Iowa's Loess Hills."

We hope tools like this, and others we make available, will be of assistance to those seeking the best options for themselves, their family and their property.

Loess Hills Alliance

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or visit us at www.loesshillsalliance.com

The Loess Hills are a unique landform found within western Iowa and northwest Missouri. Here along the eastern edge of the Missouri River floodplain massive drifts of wind-blown glacial deposits were formed thousands of years ago. These unusual hills are known for their rugged terrain, scenic beauty, susceptibility to erosion, and arid growing conditions.

Prior to Euro-American settlement, Iowa was dominated by over 30 million acres of prairie. The Loess Hills supported a combination of mixed- and tall-grass prairie and in some sheltered areas probably boasted bur oak woodlands and savanna. Since settlement, the majority of the state's natural systems have been eliminated due to conversion to agriculture, development, and disruption of the natural processes. In fact, less than 0.1% of Iowa's native prairie remains today. Additionally, much of Iowa's native savanna and bur oak woodlands have been lost. The Loess Hills present a tremendous opportunity for conservation of some of Iowa's natural resources.

The Loess Hills harbor some of the state's largest remaining natural areas. Most of the state's remaining prairie can be found clinging to the tops of the driest ridges. The rugged terrain has slowed development and has spared much of the landform from the plow. However, the natural areas persisting within the region face serious threats. Development continues to spread and, in many cases, destroys natural areas. On a larger scale, some of the natural processes, which influence the natural systems, have been altered.

The most important process, which has been altered, is fire. Historically wildfires burned through a given area every 3-7 years. The natural systems evolved with fire as a natural component and were dependent on it for revitalization and stimulation. Following Euro-American settlement, fire suppression efforts, and changes in the landscape contributed to a dramatic decline in natural fire frequency and size.

Other influencing factors have been eliminated as well, and the result is a drastically changed landscape. The 'bald', treeless hills that Lewis and Clark noted in their journals have succumbed to encroaching woody vegetation and reckless development. Vast vistas of native grassland are no more and large areas unhindered by the influences of modern society are gone. Natural communities are struggling to persist. Public and private conservation agencies have long recognized the need to preserve certain areas within the Loess Hills, but now realize that these efforts fall short, and private landowners hold the key to successful restoration and preservation of important natural areas in the Loess Hills. The Loess Hills Alliance is committed to assisting private landowners with natural areas management and strives to provide a forum in which the people have a voice and a hand in the future of this impressive landform.

The Stewardship Resource Directory provides a guide for the private landowner to the agencies and organizations that offer technical advice, assistance, and programs related to natural areas management.

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Special Thanks

Cover Photo	Tom Bruegger, Director, Monona Conservation Board
Insets	Kevin Pape, Iowa DNR Harrison County Conservation Board
Inside Pictorial Photos	Susanne Hickey, Nature Conservancy Pottawattamie County Conservation Board
Inside Back Photo	Harrison County Conservation Board

Fire Equipment Cache

Contact your local County Conservation Board.

Prescribed fire is an important tool for natural areas management.



In partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Loess Hills Alliance purchased seven sets of equipment for prescribed burning. This equipment consists of items such as backpack water sprayers, drip torches, radios, flappers, nomex gear and other items needed to outfit a burn crew of five. Training and a prescribed burn plan are recommended prior to utilizing the equipment.

Prescribed Fire Workshops



Contact the Loess Hills Alliance, The Nature Conservancy or your local County Conservation Board.

These trees were cleared with money from the WHIP program.

The Stewardship Committee is sponsoring training for private landowners and others interested in utilizing prescribed fire as a management tool. These one-day workshops are presented by area experts and provide training in the use of fire including the ecological benefits, equipment use, and hands-on demonstrations. Workshops are planned for each county.

Summer Stewardship Crews

Contact the Alliance to determine if you qualify for assistance.

A summer stewardship crew assists a local landowner.



In partnership with The Nature Conservancy, the Alliance has funded stewardship crews to assist private landowners with their prairie management needs. The crews work on private lands with priority given to those lands under long-term protection.

Technical Workshops



Contact the Loess Hills Alliance for schedules.

Assistance with mechanical removal of cedar trees is available through several sources.

Throughout the year, the Stewardship Committee sponsors various workshops to address issues such as grazing management, cedar tree control, exotic species control, etc. These workshops provide a forum for sharing information on management of our grasslands and woodlands and for meeting other interested people.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Challenge Cost Share Assistance (Grant)

Contact: USFWS, local Private Lands Coordinator at DeSoto NWR

Funding is available twice a year, generally for habitat projects requesting over \$2,000. Applications and processing goes through your local FWS Private Lands coordinator.

Conservation Reserve Program

Contact: your county USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

FSA and the NRCS administer the CRP program. Under the competitive CRP, landowners bid eligible land into the program. Acceptance is in competition with land nationally. In the continuous CRP program, landowners can find out if their land is eligible and what the payments will be if they enroll and can sign up at any time.

The CRP program provides funding for planting cropland into permanent vegetative cover. Payments are then provided to keep the ground in permanent cover during the life of the CRP.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Contact: your county USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program provides technical, educational, and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to encourage and support conservation of natural resources on private lands. The program provides technical assistance, cost-share payments, incentive payments and education to producers who enter into 5 to 10 year contracts. Practices include such activities as pasture management, filter strips, manure management, and permanent wildlife habitat.

Fifty percent of the funding available for the program will be targeted at natural resource concerns relating to livestock production. The program is carried-out primarily in priority areas that may be watersheds, regions, or multi-state areas, and for significant statewide natural resource concerns that are outside of geographic priority areas.

Forestry Incentives Program (FIP)

Contact: your county USDA,
Natural Resources Conservation
Service - District Forester

The Forestry Incentives Program (FIP) supports good forest management practices on privately owned non-industrial forestlands nationwide. FIP is designed to benefit the environment while meeting future demands for wood products. Eligible practices are tree planting, timber stand improvement, site preparation for natural regeneration, and other related activities. FIP is available in counties designated by a Forest Service survey of eligible private timber acreage.

Forest Legacy Program

Contact: your county USDA,
Natural Resources Conservation
Service - District Forester

The FLP conserves the resource values of forestland, emphasizing lands of regional and national significance that are threatened with nonforest uses. Conservation easements or purchases are the methods used to accomplish the program objectives.

Forest Stewardship Program

Contact: District Forester

The FSP takes a multiple-resources approach to managing non-industrial private forest lands by bringing expertise of State-employed foresters, biologists and private consultants to private landowners to help prepare natural resources management plans. The plans encourage landowners to become active in planning and managing their forests.

Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Contact: USFWS, local Private
Lands Coordinator at DeSoto
NWR

This program is a voluntary, wildlife habitat assistance program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The FWS provides technical and financial assistance to landowners who want to restore or improve habitat on their land. Funding and assistance to landowners is available for such activities as prairie management, wetland restoration, stream corridor management. Landowners receiving assistance through this program agree to maintain the habitat for not less than 10 years.

Stewardship Incentives Program (SIP)

Contact: your county USDA
County FSA office - District
Forester

The Stewardship Incentives Program provides technical and financial assistance to encourage non-industrial private forest landowners to keep their lands and natural resources productive and healthy. Qualifying land includes rural lands with existing tree cover or land suitable for growing trees and which a private individual, group, association, corporation, Indian tribe, or other legal private entity owns. Eligible landowners must have an approved Forest Stewardship Plan and own 1,000 or fewer acres of qualifying land. Authorizations may be obtained for exceptions of up to 5,000 acres. Applications are made through your county FSA office. Applications can be any time of year, but applications are approved on a first come basis. The local Iowa DNR Forester will review the applications. If no funding is available, your practice will be deferred until new funding is available. Funding is limited, so signing up as soon as possible is important.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

Contact: your county USDA,
Natural Resources Conservation
Service

The Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary program to restore wetlands. Participating landowners can establish conservation easements of either permanent or 30-year duration, or can enter into restoration cost-share agreements where no easement is involved. In exchange for establishing a permanent easement, the landowner receives payment up to the agricultural value of the land and 100 percent of the restoration costs for restoring the wetlands. The 30-year easement payment is 75 percent of what would be provided for a permanent easement on the same site and 75 percent of the restoration cost. The voluntary agreements are for a minimum 10-year duration and provide for 75 percent of the cost of restoring the involved wetlands. Easements and restoration cost-share agreements establish wetland protection and restoration as the primary land use for the duration of the easement or agreement. In all instances, landowners continue to control access to their land.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

Contact: your county USDA,
Natural Resources
Conservation Service

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program provides financial incentives to develop habitat for fish and wildlife on private lands. Participants agree to implement a

wildlife habitat development plan and USDA agrees to provide cost-share assistance (75%) for the initial implementation of wildlife habitat development practices. USDA and program participants enter into a cost-share agreement for wildlife habitat development. This agreement generally lasts a minimum of 10 years from the date that the contract is signed.

STATE PROGRAM

REAP – Resource Enhancement and Protection Program

Contact: your county USDA,
Natural Resources and
Conservation Service
Applications for the REAP cost-

share assistance must be made at your county NRCS office. REAP funding runs from July to July each year and are allocated on a first come basis. These funds can be used for a variety of natural areas management including woodland management. A good time to apply for REAP funds is on or before July 1.

PRIVATE PROGRAM

Iowa Prairie Network Small Grants Program

Contact: a local board member for application or state IPN office

IPN offers small grants up to \$250.00 for management of virgin prairie. Short proposals are accepted throughout the year and will be reviewed by committee members. Examples of grants that have been funded in the

Loess Hills include funding for purchase of chainsaws for cedar tree removal in Loess Hills prairie.



The Stewardship Committee's summer interns cleared encroaching woody brush that threatens the natural prairie ecosystem.

ORGANIZATIONS/AGENCIES WORKING IN THE HILLS

Audubon Society of Omaha

The Audubon Society of Omaha, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, is a grassroots non-profit, 501(C)(3), conservation/environmental organization serving Eastern Nebraska and Western Iowa. Its mission is to take an active part in the preservation of the biodiversity of ecosystems, restoration or purchase of our natural habitats, and to educate the public of the values of our natural world through the enjoyment of its birds, mammals and other wildlife within the area.

Cooperative Extension Service

ISU Extension provides technical assistance on agricultural issues, and education information and programs about everything from crops, livestock, whole farm planning, and farm business management to forestry, publications and education that cover Iowa wildlife and plants, lawns and gardens. To the communities and counties of Iowa, Extension offers land-use planning & zoning, watershed management education, community development, leadership training, and public official training workshops. Extension also offers extensive educational opportunities to youth and students through school sys-

tems and organizations on the topics mentioned.

County Conservation Boards

The CCB are local natural resource management and outdoor recreation agencies. Conservation Boards help educate local residents about the natural world and administer roadside vegetation management programs.

Ducks Unlimited

is a private organization and will cost share with private landowners on some habitat projects. Your local NRCS office or CCB office should be able to provide you with your local DU representative.

Iowa Audubon

The mission of Iowa Audubon is to promote the enjoyment, protection, and restoration of Iowa's natural ecosystems with a focus on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. With a particular emphasis on bird protection, birdwatching, and environmental education, Iowa Audubon can provide landowners with land management and protection suggestions as well as local contacts throughout the Loess Hills.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

A state agency, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources's mission is "to manage, protect, conserve, and develop Iowa's natural resources so that the quality of life for Iowans is significantly enhanced by the utilization and enjoyment of those resources." The DNR is organized into several divisions, including: Fish & Wildlife; Parks, Recreation, and Preserves; Environmental Protection; Forests and Prairies.

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

The INHF builds partnerships and educates Iowans to protect, preserve and enhance Iowa's natural resources for future generations. The current priorities of this member supported organization include permanent land protection, trail and greenway establishment, and promotion of improved land management.

Iowa Prairie Network

The IPN purpose is to learn about, teach about, enjoy and protect Iowa's prairie heritage.

Loess Hills Audubon Society

Loess Hills Audubon Society exists to enjoy and promote birding, to support ornithology, to educate

individuals and the general public, and to be an advocate for wild areas and environmental issues. The goals of the chapter include providing environmental education in the schools and providing quality programs and outings.

Loess Hills Preservation Society

The Society works to protect the Loess Hills through education, land protection projects, sound landuse planning and land acquisition. It is the mission of the Society to promote and utilize voluntary land protection methods and land acquisition to ensure that the Loess Hills' integrity continues for generations.

The Nature Conservancy, Iowa Chapter

The Nature Conservancy's mission is to protect plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands & water they need to survive. Accomplishment of this mission in the Loess Hills is being sought through outreach programs, acquisition and management of key sites, and working with private landowners to provide assistance and information on protecting and managing their land.

Pheasants Forever

Pheasants Forever is a non-profit organization with programs to improve wildlife habitat, especially

for upland game birds. Pheasants Forever has both statewide and local programs. Your local NRCS office or County Conservation Board office should be able to provide you with your local PF coordinator.

Sioux Rivers RC&D

Mission: To increase the cooperation between the member sponsors to enhance the quality of life for residents of the area through the identification of problems, and the determination and implementation of common objectives, goals, and strategies. The Sioux Rivers RC&D serves Plymouth, Cherokee, Woodbury, Ida, and Monona Counties. The goals of the Sioux Rivers RC&D include: 1) Economic development; 2) Recreation and tourism; 3) Natural resources conservation and protection; 4) Water quality; 5) Community improvement; and 6) Environmental education.

Golden Hills RC&D

Mission: To develop and promote economic, human, and natural resources through cooperative efforts.

Golden Hills RC&D serves Harrison, Shelby, Pottawattamie, Cass, Mills, Montgomery, Fremont, and Page Counties. The goals of the organization include: 1) Develop

economic opportunities that capitalize on the region's unique natural features and resources; 2) Ensure the availability of quality land and water resources to satisfy the region's business, recreational, residential, and wildlife needs; 3) Work with public agencies and private organizations to protect the environment; 4) Provide natural resource-related community services that benefit the youth, elderly, and disadvantaged.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)

The Plymouth, Woodbury, Monona, Harrison, Pottawattamie, Mills, and Fremont Counties Soil and Water Conservation Districts are each independent organizations that provide cost share and program benefits to the landowners of the area. The SWCD board members are elected and make up the local arm of the federal, state and local conservation partnership that has been in place for more than 50 years. The SWCD's work on an individual basis for resource protection of the land in their individual districts. The SWCD's work closely with the NRCS and are housed in the NRCS offices in each county.

USDA – Farm Service Agency (FSA)

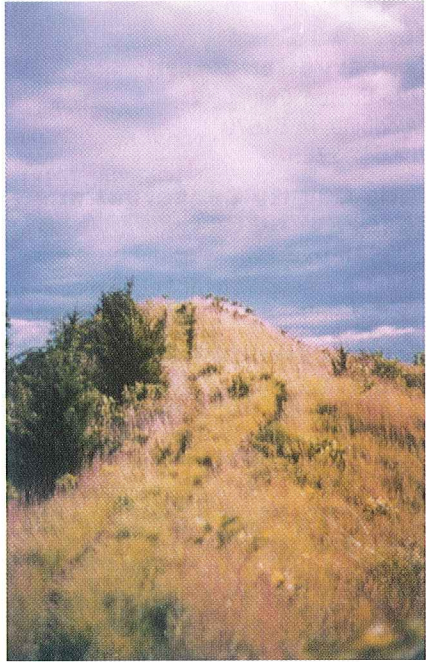
The FSA administers incentive, cost share and other payments to landowners who participate in USDA conservation programs. FSA administers conservation programs in cooperation with NRCS. The FSA and NRCS offices are located in USDA Service Centers in each of the 7 counties.

USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to landowners to impact soil, air, water, animals, plants, and humans in a positive environmental way. The NRCS evolved from the Soil Conservation Service (or former SCS office).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Private Lands Program

The USFWS private lands program provides technical assistance and cost share with private landowners on wetland and upland habitat projects. Contact DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge for information about these programs.



PHOTOS:
Pottawattamie
County
Conservation
Board

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(712) 769-2623

**Loess Hills State Forest,
Area Forester**

Box 158-219 Front
Pisgah, IA 51564-0158
brent.olson@dnr.state.ia.us
(712) 456-2924

**Preparation Canyon State
Park, Park Manager**

c/o Lewis & Clark State Park
Onawa, IA 51040
(712) 423-2829
DNR Forests & Prairies Division

Fremont County NRCS

301 Main St.
P.O. Box 490
Sidney, IA 51652
(712) 374-2014

Harrison County NRCS

715 N. 2nd Ave.
Logan, IA 51546
(712) 644-2210

Mills County NRCS

204 West 5th St.
P.O. Box 190
Malvern, IA 51551

(712) 624-8606

Monona County NRCS

315 10th Street
Onawa, IA 51040
(712) 423-2624

Plymouth County NRCS

1100 12th Street SW
LeMars, IA 51031
(712) 546-8858

Pottawattamie County NRCS

305 McKenzie Ave. Suite 1
Council Bluffs, IA 51503
(712) 328-2489

Woodbury County NRCS

206 First St.
P.O. Box 725
Sargent Bluff, IA 51054-0725
(712) 943-6727

Sioux Rivers RC&D

206 1st Street
P.O. Box 874
Sergeant Bluffs, IA 51054
712 943-7882

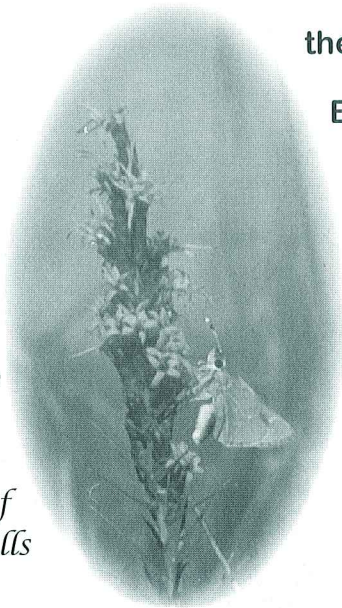
**Waubonsie State Park, Park
Manager**

R.R. #2, Box 66
Hamburg, IA 51640
(712) 382-2786

Two impor-
tant natural
communities
within the
landform are
Oak
Woodlands
and Loess
Hills Prairies.



Maintaining
the
Balance



*The
Stewardship
Committee
is a sub-
committee of
the Loess Hills
Alliance*

designed to address the variety of issues involved in managing our natural resources in the Loess Hills. To effectively manage the native prairies and woodland communities, many tools must be made available. The Stewardship Committee is dedicated to identifying and providing these tools including; training, advice and equipment for various activities such as prescribed burning, natural areas management planning, hands-on assistance and others. Stewardship Committee meetings are held approximately every 6 weeks and participation at meetings is always welcome. Contact the Alliance to find out when the next meeting is scheduled.