

A PRAIRIE GEM IN IOWA

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Abstract: Iowa contains prairie remnants harboring biological treasures, i.e. Iowa “gems”. Lageschulte Prairie, a 2.3ha mesic to wet-mesic remnant in Bremer, Co. Iowa is one of those gems. Throughout the prairie’s history, visitors identified flora and fauna, but methodical inventories irregularly occurred. Floral inventories occurred in 1988, fall 2006, and in June 2007. During 1988 inventories occurred weekly throughout the growing season by collecting and identifying species when they bloomed. Inventories occurred in fall 2006 by creating 40m west-east transects, marking a 1m² area every 5m, and identifying all plants in the square. Inventories in June 2007 occurred by walking west to east along parallel lines and stopping to collect each new species encountered. Arthropod inventories occurred in June 2007 by walking through the vegetation in 15m west to east parallel lines and swinging a sweep net. Ant inventories also utilized baits. Ecologically conservative, prairie-associated floral and faunal species exist in this remnant. Examples include two plant species not currently listed in the USDA plants database for Bremer County, *Gentiana andrewsii* (closed gentian), and *Zigadenus elegans* (death camas). Additionally, two ant species, known grassland habitat specialists, include *Formica glacialis* in the wettest portion of the prairie, and *F. fossiceps*, in high-quality portions. *Formica montana*, a species characteristic of, but not restricted to, undisturbed prairies, occurs throughout. It is important to produce a management program that maintains diversity in this remnant prairie and that manages invading populations of exotic *Bromus japonicus* (Japanese brome) and *Phalaris arundinacea* (reed canary grass).