

IRVINE PRAIRIE

Winter Meeting | February 28, 2024



Tallgrass Prairie
CENTER

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University of Northern Iowa.

Outreach and Education

2023





Events



JANUARY 25

Signing of papers transferring Irvine Prairie Expansion to the UNI Foundation Properties LLC

Outreach and education efforts in 2023 were focused on celebrating the Irvine Prairie expansion. Two well-attended special events were held, and the expansion generated several media articles that reached audiences across the state. And we ended the year with Irvine Prairie featured in National Geographic!

MAY 5

Staff and volunteers burned roughly 20 acres of the south tract

MAY 25

Union High School students assist transplanting efforts

JUNE 9

Irvine Prairie Dedication and Celebration

JULY 29

An Evening of Music with Ann Zimmerman

SEPTEMBER 12

Benton County Conservation Monarch Tagging

OCTOBER

Iowa Roadside Conference tours

News Media 2023

Date	News media (digital, print and broadcast)
Feb. 2	Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier: <i>Irvine Prairie size tripled</i>
Feb. 2	North Tama Telegraph: <i>Irvine Prairie to triple in size</i>
Feb. 6	Northern Iowan: <i>UNI's Tallgrass Prairie Center gifted 300 acres for preservation</i>
Feb. 10	<i>Talk of Iowa</i> on Iowa Public Radio: Laura Jackson and Cathy Irvine discuss Irvine Prairie expansion with host Charity Nebbe.
Feb. 15	Northern Iowan: <i>Traducción: Tallgrass Prairie: Las praderas de pastos altos de UNI</i>
May 4	North Tama Telegraph: <i>Irvine Prairie lights up the sky: Controlled burn conducted on rural Dysart prairie</i>
June 12	Cedar Rapids Gazette: <i>Farmland donation will triple size of reconstructed prairie in Benton County</i>
June 13	Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier: <i>Donation turning 300 acres of farmland into prairie</i>
June 17	Cedar Rapids Gazette editorial: <i>A gift to Iowa's environment</i>
Oct. 6	North Tama Telegraph: <i>Iowa PBS' Iowa Life to feature Dysart's Irvine Prairie Oct. 10 & 15</i>
Oct. 10 and 15	Iowa Public Broadcasting: <i>Inaugural episode of Iowa Life features Irvine Prairie</i>
Oct. 12	North Tama Telegraph: <i>Irvine Prairie draws a crowd as part of annual conference, new visitor kiosk, weather station greet visitors</i>

Publications 2023

- **Iowa Public Broadcasting System ADVANCE** — Iowa Life, Oct. 2023, Vol. 54, No. 10
- **TPC Highlights 2023** — Irvine Prairie highlighted, *Restoring a piece of the original Iowa landscape*, 400 copies printed and mailed to TPC friends and supporters. Many more copies were distributed electronically as PDFs.

Social Media 2023

Date	Facebook post subject	Reach	Engagement
Jan 26	Thanks to a generous gift, a tallgrass prairie restoration project managed by the Tallgrass Prairie Center will more than triple in size.	3,499	720
Feb. 2	It's a good day when a prairie makes the front page of an area newspaper! Check out the full story in the link shared above.	1,086	173
Feb. 02	Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier story on expansion shared.	495	95
Feb. 14.	Tallgrass Prairie Center Director Laura Jackson and Cathy Irvine, founder of Irvine Prairie, featured on Iowa Public Radio's Talk of Iowa.	527	29
April 27	Union High School science teacher Craig Hemsath bases one of his favorite demonstrations on the TPC's Routes for Infiltration lesson plan.	1,408	218
May 31	Almost 80 students from Union High School in La Porte City joined forces last week with staff of the Tallgrass Prairie Center, AmeriCorps service members and UNI students to transplant more than 2,300 native plants at Irvine Prairie.	1,309	215
June 5	Join us this Friday, June 9, at 4 pm to enjoy the tallgrass prairie in bloom and celebrate the expansion of Irvine Prairie near Dysart.	5,772	708
June 13	The Tallgrass Prairie Center is grateful for all who attended Friday's celebration and dedication of the expansion Irvine Prairie, and for all who helped us plan this inspiring afternoon.	3,370	831
July 11	Kansas-based musician Ann Zimmerman will present an evening of music in Celebration of prairie at Irvine Prairie at 4 p.m. on Saturday, July 29.	3,254	316
Aug. 1	We had a magical evening at our first music event at Irvine Prairie on Saturday.	1,969	255
Aug. 28	Our friends at Benton County Conservation will be hosting monarch tagging events in September, including a Sept. 12 event at 10 a.m. at Irvine Prairie.	Share - no stats	

Social Media 2023 (continued)

Date	Facebook post subject	Reach	Engagement
Oct. 9, 2024	Tune in Tuesday evening, Oct. 10, to see Irvine Prairie on Iowa PBS' Iowa Life! The show, which will feature Cathy Irvine, will air at 6:30 p.m. It will be rebroadcast Sunday, Oct. 15, at 10:30 a.m.	2,042	156
Oct. 12, 2024	More than 140 people gathered in Cedar Falls last week for "Roadside Innovations," the 36th annual Iowa Roadside Conference.	1,034	210
Nov. 16, 2024	Dr. Mark Myers' Wildlife Ecology and Management lab installed three wildlife camera traps at Irvine Prairie a couple of weeks ago.	2,427	678
Nov. 21, 2024	We are thankful for the ideal planting weather last week. Justin Meissen and Andy Olson broadcast seeded 25 acres of Irvine Prairie over two days.	4,825	308
Jan. 3, 2024	Have you heard? The Tallgrass Prairie Center is in National Geographic this month!	6,242	1,081

Miscellaneous

- Three wildlife cameras were installed in by Mark Myer's Wildlife Ecology and Management class in late October
- A weather station was installed in August 2023
- Irvine Prairie Flyover 360 (2021) now has 372 views on YouTube (increase of 46 percent)
- Irvine Prairie Burn video added, now has 364 views on YouTube (increase of 15 percent)

2023 Review from Google Maps

"It is simply amazing to experience a glimpse of what Iowa is rightfully supposed to look like, and a joy to see generosity and nature thriving in what is arguably one of the most magical places in Iowa."

Weston Henning, Ames

2023 Volunteers

- Burn volunteers — Benton County Conservation, Jonathan Taiber, Michael Walter, Rachel Palmer, Craig Sage and Roger White
- Craig Hemsath and Union High School students
- Ollie

The Tallgrass Prairie Center would like to acknowledge the significant contributions made to Irvine Prairie by Green Iowa AmeriCorps Service Members Bri Hull, Mallory Sage, Andrea Fager, Ali Peck and Ethan Kober.

2024: Looking Ahead

- *The Tallgrass Prairie Center is working on holding an event at Irvine Prairie later this year in cooperation with the Benton County Conservation Board.*
- A new TPC website, which features Irvine Prairie, will debut in 2024.



Outreach work in 2024 will continue to focus on celebrating Irvine Prairie and using the prairie to help raise awareness of the mission of the TPC. We will continue to explore ways to efficiently meet the need for field trips and group tours, to inform and inspire the public to explore Irvine through print and electronic communications.

Education

Involve K-12 Students in Restoration Work

We will finalize plans for 2024 visits after prescribed burns are complete.

Personnel: LW, JM, AmeriCorps

Materials: Transplants, dibbles, marking supplies, watering supplies

Field Trips and Tours

We will continue to staff field trips when requested and as staff time allows. Thanks to previous visitors, we now have sets of tried and tested activities we can use for student-focused events.

Personnel: LW, AmeriCorps, volunteers

Materials/Equipment: Varies by activity type and season but may include sets of insect nets, field guides, binoculars, seed collecting supplies

Community Engagement

Communication

Activities in 2024 will build on the momentum created by the announcement of the Irvine Prairie Expansion. We will continue to use the Irvine Prairie web pages and Facebook posts to publicize and share information about Irvine Prairie, with an emphasis on tourism. We will seek opportunities to publish information and articles about Irvine in mainstream local and/or statewide publications. Staff members will continue to take photographs of the landscape, flora/fauna, and activities at Irvine throughout the seasons for use in electronic and print publications. We will develop a new information brochure for Irvine Prairie, and Mallory is working on a new trails map.

Personnel: AP (lead), all staff and AmeriCorps

Materials/Equipment: TBD

Logistics

Work will focus on improving the visitor welcome area. We will paint the box for the visitors' log, update the kiosk information and add a box to kiosk frame for brochures. We will continue to investigate a wooden frame or wall to hide the portapotty (if this can be done in a way that is compatible with servicing the toilet).

Personnel: MW, KN, LJ, AP

Materials/Equipment: TBD