

Reese Homestead

DEDICATION

June 3, 2012



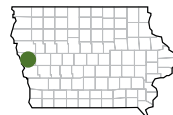
Located on the west face of the Loess Hills, the Reese homestead contains restored prairie remnants (shown here) and wetlands. INHF, the Monona County Conservation Board and the Iowa DNR are partnering to protect this property. When fundraising is complete, the 280-acre site will be open for public recreation, environmental education and even overnight stays in a family cabin.



Family conservation tradition will endure

Susanne Hickey/The Nature Conservancy

by Ann Robinson



Ever since R.T. Reese settled just north of Turin in 1856, his descendents have owned and cared for their place on the west slope of the Loess Hills. Located on the Loess Hills Scenic Byway, the property has become familiar to many as a bed and breakfast and a site for outdoor events.

Recently, the four Reese siblings who still owned the land decided they must sell their 280

acres, including its restored hill prairie, Missouri River bottom wetland and historic homestead. As they say goodbye, the land begins its next phase as a public area and environmental education site.

“For us, the 150 years of our ancestors living on this land has made it a spiritual home, and we feel responsible to make sure it is cared for forever.”

— Jo Reese Nelson

The future unfolds

When the family listed the land for sale, the Monona County Conservation Board and the Iowa

Department of Natural Resources asked INHF to help them acquire this unique site as a public treasure. INHF is serving as the interim landowner and will transfer the property to each agency respectively after needed funds are fully secured.

Located within the Turin Special Landscape Area, the property adjoins and expands the state’s Loess Hills Wildlife Management Area and Davis Wetland.

“It’s rare that you find a property that has so many different aspects, including the high quality prairie, the wetland, and the historic buildings,” says Craig Hartman, chair of Monona County Conservation Board. “We’re glad to help ensure that this bit of Loess Hills beauty will always remain an attraction and benefit for the community – from local students to hunters to prairie enthusiasts.”

A tradition continues

Under its private ownership, the property already had a long history of natural land restoration and environmental education.

“Our great-grandfather was the first person of European descent to be a part of this piece of land, and three generations of our family were born and raised on it,” says Jo Reese Nelson. “Howard Reese, our grandfather, sacrificed during the ‘30s in order to keep the homestead. Our parents, Don and Luella Reese, were farmers and environmentalists.”

In addition to conservation efforts on his own land, Don Reese was involved in founding the Loess Hills Prairie Seminar held nearby, now in its third decade as a popular annual outdoor learning opportunity.

Following in his stepfather’s tradition, David Zahrt and wife Lin restored a wetland and an extensive tract of native prairie. The family enrolled the riparian wetland in a Wetland Reserve Program permanent easement through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Last year, they protected their hillside prairie through a conservation easement with The Nature Conservancy.

Meanwhile, the Zahrts also converted the family home into the Country Homestead Bed and Breakfast, where they hosted many conservation-related events. Until his recent retirement, David also worked part-time for INHF to promote Loess Hills protection.

“We have deeply appreciated David and Lin’s commitment to the Loess Hills, and his advocacy on behalf of its natural and cultural heritage,” says Mark Ackelson, INHF president. “And we appreciate the whole family’s willingness to work with so many partners in protecting this land for conservation.”

Funding nearly complete

More than 90 percent of funding for the project has already been committed. Major donors include Reese Homestead, Inc., Pheasants Forever (both the Monona County Chapter and the state chapter), the National Wild Turkey Federation state chapter, the Loess Hills Alliance, and Marlene Richardson, who contributed in memory of her husband Tom.

Public support includes federal Pittman-Robertson funds, which come from a tax on sporting equipment, and Iowa’s Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program. The land will not be open to the public until fundraising is complete.

“We are all connected to the land of our ancestors, and in a way, the land claims us,” says Jo Reese Nelson on behalf of the Reese family. “For us, the 150 years of our family living on this land have made it a spiritual home, and we feel responsible to make sure it is cared for forever.”

Ann Robinson is INHF’s Outreach Coordinator.

Iowa Natural Heritage – Fall 2010

Want to help?

About \$40,000 is needed to complete the Reese project so that it can be opened to the public. Pledges or contributions can be made through Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and should be designated “Reese project.” Those who contribute \$1,000 or more will be recognized on permanent signage at the site.



Courtesy of Reese family



David Zahrt

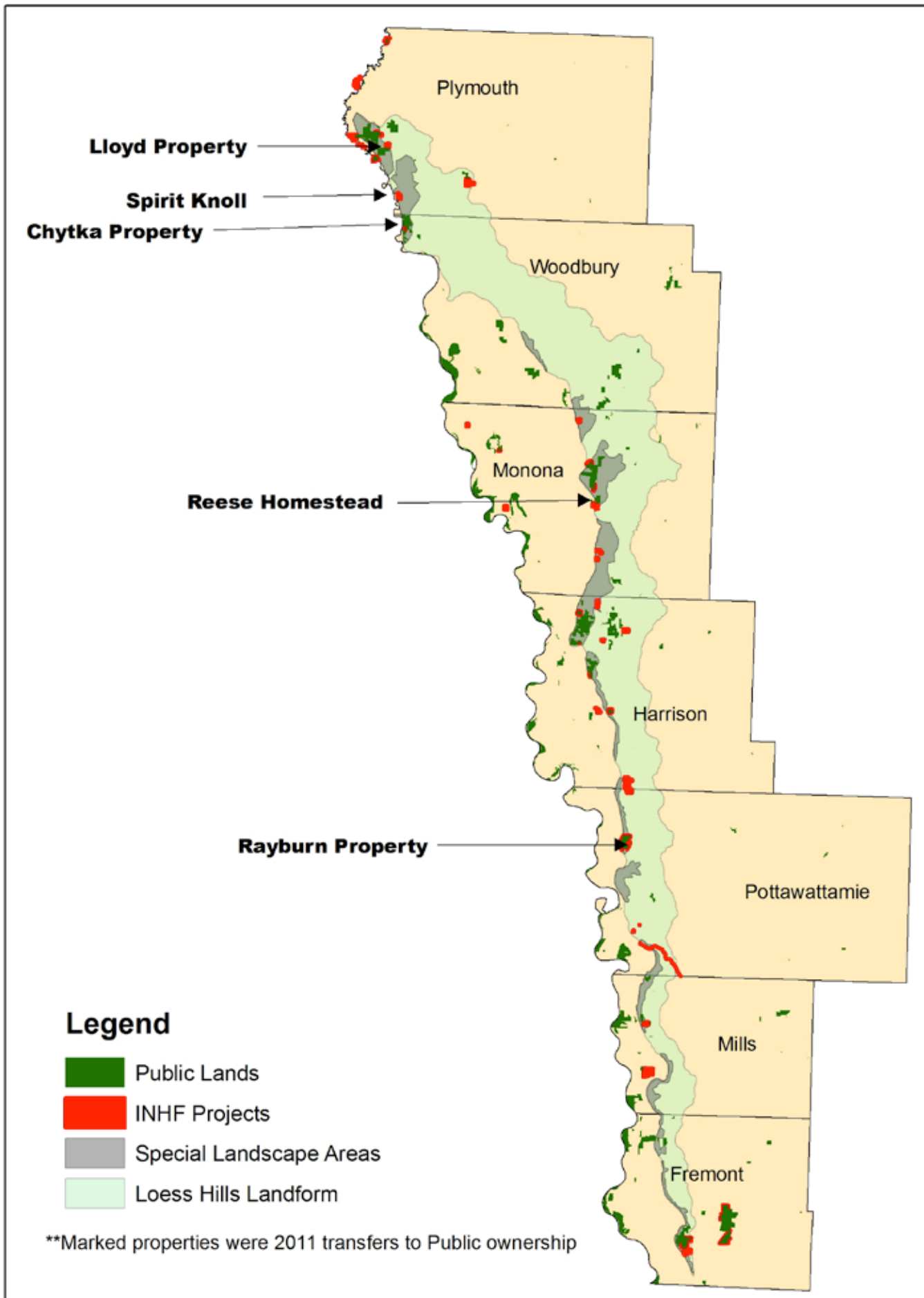
This 1916 photo (top) shows the openness of the Loess Hills before long-term fire suppression and tree plantings overtook its prairies. The latest generation of Reese family owners has been painstakingly restoring those prairies with tree cutting and prescribed burns (just above).

Karen Reese Bird



The Reese home, has recently been operated as the Country Homestead Bed & Breakfast. Four Reese siblings sold the property to INHF. From left: Karen Reese Bird, Christy Zahrt Tews-Sutton, David Zahrt and Jo Reese Nelson.

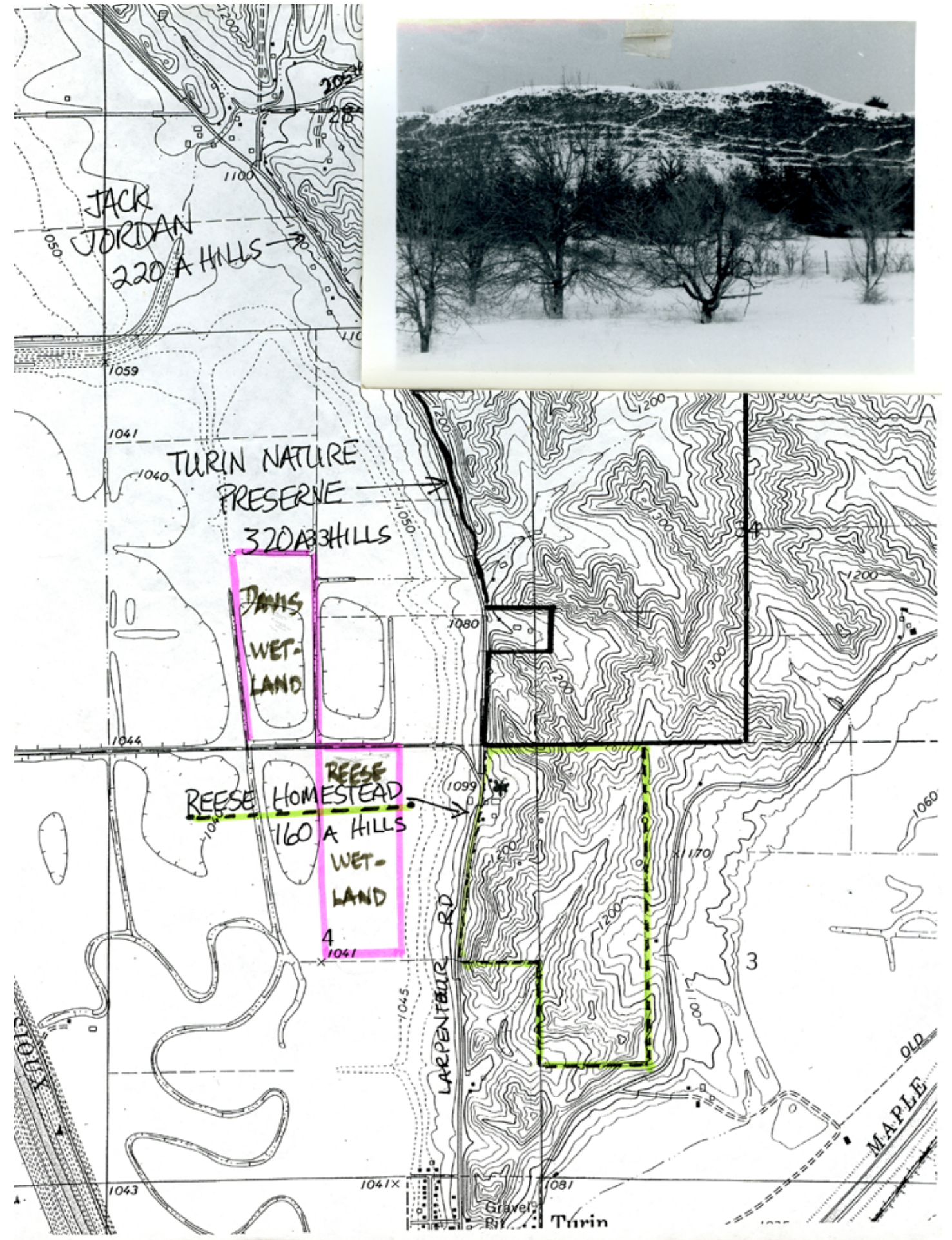
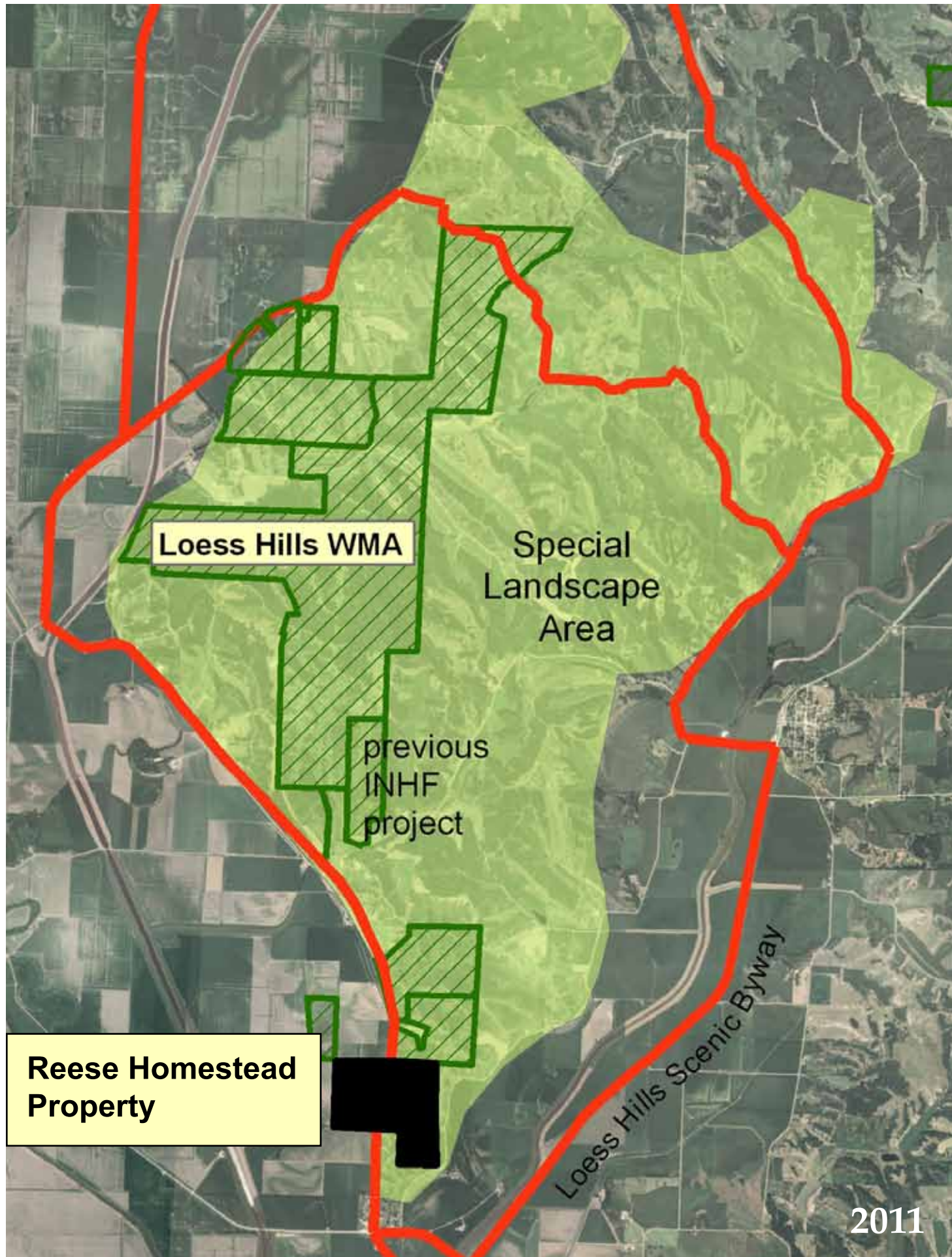




The Reese Homestead has been recognized as a nationally significant area within the Loess Hills National Landmark (1968)



Reese Family members, 2010



**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PARCELS
IN LAND USE PLAN
SEPTEMBER 2008**

14. W. RIDGE - E. SLOPE #3 // Mixed prairie volunteered after clearing cedars. Encroachment of sumac and dogwood.

15. W. RIDGE - E. SLOPE #4 // Prairie. Sierra Club began sumac eradication in 2007.

16. W. RIDGE - E. SLOPE #5 // Mid 1990s clearing. Some forbs. Sumac and dogwood encroaching.

17. PASS MEADOW // Mostly brome. Two sink holes near gully.

18. MIDDLE MEADOW // Planted to alfalfa for food plot, succeeded by brome.

19. SOUTH MEADOW // Mostly brome. Good Stand of prairie sage.

20. THE GULLY // Cottonwoods and cedars. Shade plants: poison ivy, bee balm etc.

21. E. RIDGE - W SLOPE // Cedar infested. Occasional goat prairie patches. Paths to gully.

22. E. RIDGE PRAIRIE // Most extensive demonstration of prairie recovery. Path to #20.

23. PRAIRIE BOWL // Prairie reconstruction with native grasses and forbs. Mostly brome.

24. BOWL SOUTH // Some cedars cut. Prairie recovering along with sumac and dogwood.

25. SOUTH SLOPE BLUFF // Yucca with small amount of prairie. Many cedars.

26. FIVE ACRE PIECE // Steep hillside. Cedars, small prairie patches.

27. LARPENTEUR PRAIRIE // Reconstruction with native grasses and forbs: forbs scarce.

1. LOCUST GROVE // Planted for western windbreak for house. No prairie. Firewood.

2. NORTH ACRE // Non-native pine planted for northern windbreak. No Prairie.

3. WEST RIDGE NORTH // Some yucca, leafy spurge on steep slope under the Peak.

4. NORTH SLOPE WILDERNESS // Cedar and deciduous tree cover. No Prairie.

5. TWO ACRE PRAIRIE // Solar panels. Prairie reconstruction with native grasses and forbs: forbs scarce. Sierra Club planted in 2007.

6. WEST RIDGE: COTTAGE // Steep with erosion. Some deciduous trees in with cedars.

7. WEST RIDGE: SOUTH // Steep. Some walnut, oak and other deciduous. Yucca in the open.

8. OAK SAVANNAH // Old burr oak trees. Some underbrush clearing done in March.

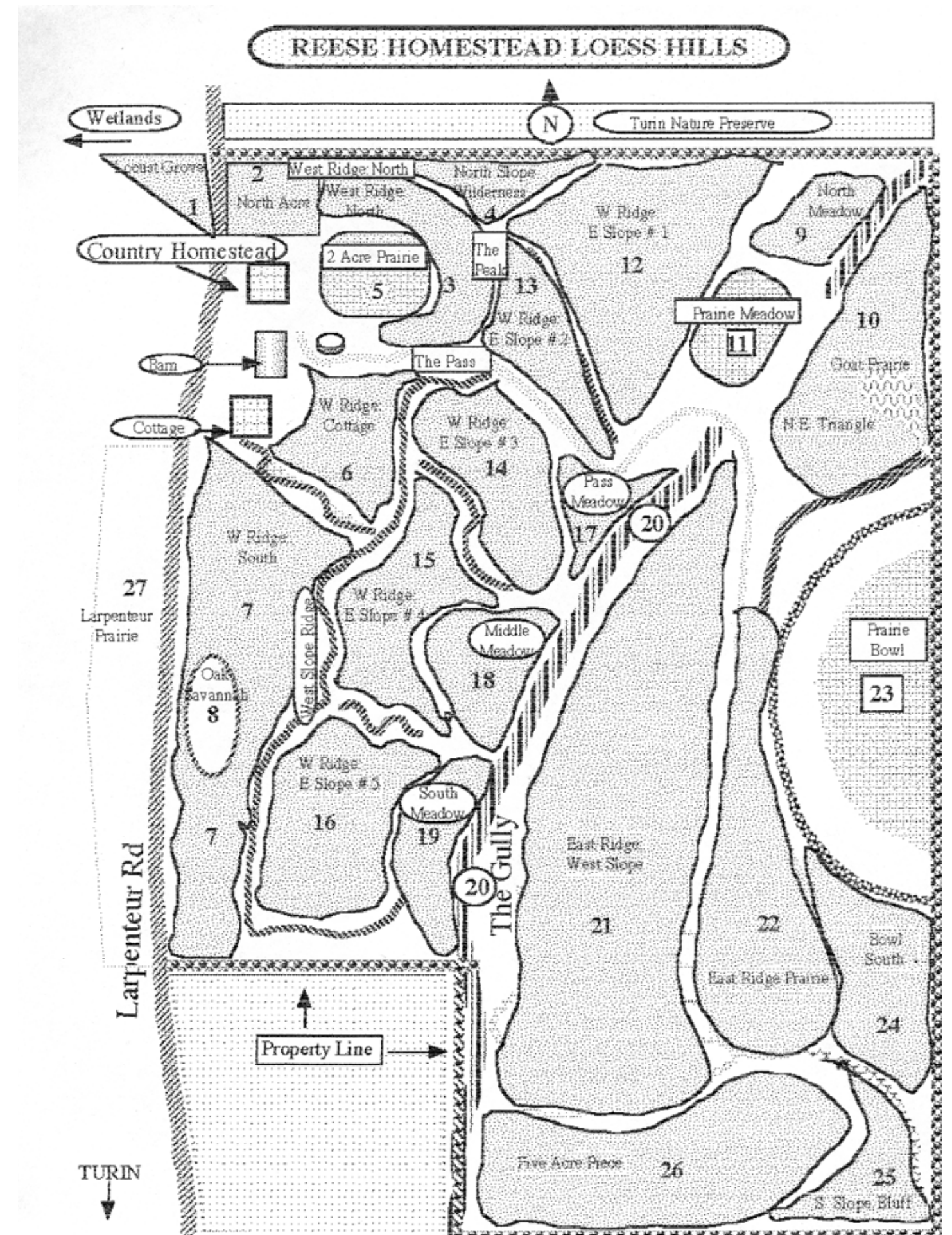
9. NORTH MEADOW // Mainly brome. Some native grass on edges.

10. NORTHEAST TRIANGLE // Small amount of goat prairie. Path cut through to #11.

11. PRAIRIE MEADOW // Reconstruction with native grasses and forbs: forbs scarce.

12. W. RIDGE - E. SLOPE #1 // Some oak, walnut and cedars. Prairie on cleared areas.

13. W. RIDGE - E. SLOPE #2 // Prairie on cleared area. Bordered by cedars.



1916



Looking East...

1993



Looking East...



Cedar removal

As recently as the 1950s the hills were still covered with prairie flora. Gradually, the Eastern Red Cedar (juniper) began to succeed the prairie. Two of the major factors contributing to this succession were of fire and continuous grazing of cattle throughout the growing season. The cedar, along with woody vegetation, was Mother Nature's way of covering the hills. In the absence of fire, the overgrazing of native grasses, the cedar and accompanying woody vegetation succeeded the prairie.

Whereas they may have been Mother Nature's attempt to curb erosion by covering the ground, they now stand to contribute to erosion. They have suppressed all vegetation under the cover of their boughs. In addition to blocking all sunlight, the needles create an allopathy, in the soil that prevents germination of any kind of seedling under the spread of the tree.

An attempt to re-establish the native prairie with its deep root system, is a simultaneous assault on the red cedar. This is an example of one such assault.



Shrine of the cedar

The humble Juniper, know as the Red Cedar, is indigenous to Iowa. Long ago this modest species took its place in the prairie biome. The cedar lived and grew with the remainder of the prairie, cooperating to produce fertile topsoil that was held in place with the prairie's deep and fibrous root system.

Never once did the cedar consider attempted aggrandizement at the expense of the remainder of the prairie. Sometimes it took its place in miniature ecosystems on the south and west slopes of terrain where other species found it difficult to survive. The cedar understood itself to be a member of an inclusive community of plants that comprised the prairie biome—the result of a divine economy.

Then the environment began to change. Human settlement began to suppress fire and harvest the grasses of the prairie. Opportunists initiated the harvest without regard to the long-term effects on the prairie of the Loess Hills. The cedar stood by and observed what was taking place. Fire, which had previously and simultaneously exercised itself as a sporadic leveling and invigorating agent, was suppressed. The prairie, which covered for itself by providing multiple species that alternatively flourished or waned depending upon the season, was decimated. Mother Nature was left with a 'bare hind-end.

Some insist that the cedar, observing this travesty made a decision to imitate the opportunism and stage a takeover of its own. Others believe that the cedar, humble as it was, simply saw that its duty was to cover for Mother Nature.

In either case, with the systematic mining of the ecosystem of the native prairie of the Loess Hills, slowly but surely the cedar took its responsibility seriously.

Some perceive the cedar as an enemy. In its attempt to cover for Mother Nature it has substituted its bows, which completely mask the soil from sunlight. The bows shed their needles on the ground creating an allopathy carpet. In place of a fibrous prairie root system, which is 5 to 10 feet deep, the Cedar supplies a root system that is shallow and compact.

*So the cedar has offered itself up as a Shrine.
By some it is cursed.
For others it represents a sacrificial offering*

David Zahrt



Susanne Hickey



Prairie Restoration

Eastern ridge on Reese Homestead, running north/south

The cedars have the most difficulty gaining a foothold on the ridges. Probably because the ridges are the driest. In the summer of 1996, a crew of The Nature Conservancy interns cleared this ridge of cedars. The prairie was scattered in patches throughout the cedars. Clearing of the cedars has enabled the prairie to reconstitute itself.

In the upper left hand corner (to the NW) is the back (E) side of one of the highest points along the West Slope of the Loess Hills. It is one mile north of Turin, along the Scenic By-way, and 200 yards behind the Homestead house. From the house to the peak is a rise of 260 feet.

In the upper center (due N) you see a portion of the Turin Nature Preserve. In the right-hand third of the pictures, you see cedars that have been compromised with fire in an attempt to restore the prairie.



Reese son David Zahrt proudly displaying the results of cutting invasive cedars off this Loess Hills Prairie.



*****CAPTION FOR PHOTOS? NEED ANY OTHER DESCRIPTION????????????*****



Interns having lunch at the country homestead B&B.

Some notable plants of the Reese Homestead prairie



June grass

Koeleria cristata

June grass has slender, un-branched stems grow 1-2 feet tall in the small, close tufts characteristic of bunch grasses. The root system is fibrous and adaptable to a wide range of soil conditions. The seed head is shaped like a spearhead and colored a light tan. June grass is one of the few cool season native prairie grasses. Growth and flowering of this cool season perennial is completed in late June, when the grass goes dormant until fall or the fol-

Hoary puccoon (Next page, bottom photo)

Lithospermum canescens

Hoary puccoon are typically dark green plants to about 15" tall with softly hairy stems and leaves, typically with several stems per plant. The leaves are stalkless, smooth-edged, and alternate, with a prominent vein along the middle. Each leaf is up to 2' 1/2" long and 1/2" wide often with a rounded tip. The flowers are in a flattened cluster at the top of the plant, with each flower about 1/2" wide. There are 5 narrow, pointed, green sepals and a tubular, deep golden yellow corolla with 5 spreading, rounded lobes.

The roots of this plant have been used medicinally and to produce a reddish dye. A similar species, Rough Puccoon occurs in sand prairies, sand savannas, and open sandy sites and has pointed leaf tips and a



Pasque Flower

Pulsatilla patens

Pasque Flowers are one of the first and most spectacular prairie flowers of spring. Shortly after the winter snow melt, low delicate stems covered with soft, spreading hairs emerge from the ground, and leaves and flowers unfold soon after. The long stemmed basal leaves are deeply divided into several narrow segments originating from a common point. These segments are themselves lobed and toothed. The single flower on each stem has 5-8 showy, pale lavender to purple petal like sepals.

The plant was used medicinally but native Americans, although the juice is reported to cause blistering.



Prairie Dandelion

Nothocalais cuspidata

Although similar to the weedy Common Dandelion found in lawns, Prairie Dandelions are native prairie plants with a very restricted habitat.

A leafless stalk originates from the center of the basal leaf cluster, growing about 1' tall and topped with a single, showy bright yellow flower. This species often grows with the Pasque Flower.



Prairie Turnip: *Psoralea esculenta*

Found on dry prairies and calcareous hills from Iowa to northern and western Great Plains. Blooming period is from May to July.

The prairie turnip is an erect perennial. It is usually less than a foot tall and is densely covered with whitish hairs. The alternate and palmately compound leaves are generally divided into five leaflets.

Several inches below the ground, the root forms an enlargement, or turnip, the size of a hen's egg. The native Americans dug these roots in June and July. The harvest had to occur after the tops had dried down but before the plants had blown loose.

The Mestwaki used the root tea for chronic constipation. The Cheyenne made a tea of its leaves to lower fever. It was the European settler's remedy for snake bite. Lewis and Clark recorded buying "bread root" frequently from American Indians.

Large-flowered beardtongue

Penstemon Grandiflorus Nutt

Found throughout the western part of the tallgrass prairie biome, in suitable habitats into Wisconsin and Illinois...It needs sandy or well-drained soils such as loess. Large-flowered beardtongue blooms in late May and early June, providing one of the spectacular events of the year. Native Americans treated toothache by chewing the root pulp of plants in this genus and placing it in the cavity. The Pawnee used a decoction of the leaves, taken internally, as a remedy for chills and fever. The Navajo applied a wet dressing of pound leave of beardtongue to rattlesnake bites; they considered this an absolute antidote.





Lead plant
Petalostemum purpureum

Both purple and white prairie clover are found together. They bloom from June to September. The plants often occur in patches. As many as 8 to 10 stems may arise from the deep and spreading perennial root. The individual flowers, about ¼-inch long, cluster tightly around a cylinder-like cone.

American Indians used the prairie clover plant medicinally by applying a tea made of the leaves to open wounds. The bruised leaves, steeped in water, were also applied the wounds. Indian women gathered the tough, elastic stems to make brooms. The Pawnee name for these plants translates as “broom weed.”

Purple coneflower
Echinacea purpurea

Purple coneflower grows from 2 to 3 feet tall. The flower head has 12 to 20 spreading or drooping, purple petal-like rays. Rays occasionally vary from purple to crimson and rarely are pale. Each ray is 1.5 to 3 inches long. The center cone is more dome-shaped than cone-shaped, and it is rough and prickly to the touch.

Plains Indians favored the root of purple coneflower for snake bites, bee stings, headaches, stomach cramps, toothaches, enlarged glands like mumps, sore throats, and hydrophobia and distemper in horses. They also discovered that the plant acted as a burn preventative, which enabled their body to endure extreme heat. Medicine men bathed their hands and arms in the juice, then picked meat out of the boiling stew pot.



Yucca
Yucca glauca

Found in dry, well-drained soils of the Great Plains and the western edge of the Midwestern prairie. Blooms early June to July. The leaves of this plant all arise from the base. They are stiff and bayonet-like but smooth except for whitish marginal hairs that are long and threadlike. The perennial evergreen leaves may be 3 feet long but are seldom more than 1/2 inches wide. These thick leaves are rounded on the underside; in curved margins give them a slightly concave upper surface.



Locoweed

Oxytropis lambertii

Found in dry, high-lime hillsides of the Great Plains and in the tallgrass prairie transition to mixed-green prairie. Blooms from May through July.

Locoweed is short, growing only 6 to 12 inches tall. One to several clustered crowns arise for a single woody taproot that may penetrate 8 feet into the soil.

Although locoweed is unpalatable, it is sometimes eaten by livestock, usually when a pasture is over grazed early in the season. Livestock sometimes become addicted to this plant, but relatively large amounts must be eaten to produce a dangerous level of poison in the system. The effects are cumulative, occurring slowly and progressing over weeks or months. In the early stages of poisoning, horses may spook easily and run into objects, as if they have faulty vision. Other effects are trembling, depression, and paralysis-- even to the degree that the animal may die. Sick animals must be removed from the plant source.

Downy Painted Cup (Right)

Castilleja sessiliflora

Found in dry prairies and plains from Wisconsin and Illinois to Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas. Blooms in May through July.

This soft, leafy perennial grows 6 to 12 inches tall. The stems, which usually grow in clusters, are covered with fine hairs and a whitish bloom, as if they had been powdered with ashes.

A related species, *C. coccinea* (Indian paintbrush), is fairly widespread in the tallgrass prairie biome, especially on sandy substrates. It has intense orange or crimson bracts that nearly hide the greenish yellow flowers.

The flowers of most species are considered edible; they are eaten raw. The Navajo steeped the plant in hot water and used it as a rinse for stings and insect bites. Hopi women prepared a tea of the entire plant of Indian paintbrush and drank it as a sort of contraceptive.

Lead plant: (to the right of center behind the Scarlet gaura)

Amphora canescens

Found on dry, sandy soils throughout the tallgrass prairie, often in dense colonies. Also found in rocky, open woodlands. Blooming time is late May to August.

A shrubby perennial, often as an undershrub in big bluestem, lead plant grows to 3 feet tall. The stems may become woody with age and be as much as 1/2 inch in diameter. The entire plant is hairy, so much so that it has a whitish appearance; this whitish cast lends a lead color to dense patches, hence its common name.

The Ogalala and other American Indians used dried leaves for smoking and for making tea. Lead plant was made into a tea as treatment for pinworms. Leaves were steeped and the liquid was used as a wash to treat eczema. The Omaha used it to prepare a moxa for rheumatism and neuralgia. The Omaha and the Ponca called it te-hu to-hi, meaning "buffalo bellow plant" probably because it flowers in the bison rutting season. It also is an important food for browsing animals.



Scarlet Gaura

Gaura parviflora Dougl

Found from Indiana to Washington and south to Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico and Mexico, it favors dry prairies and fields.

Scarlet gaura is much smaller than small-flowered gaura; it grows to only a few inches high in some areas but to as much as 3 feet in others. It is a perennial that has a very deep, spreading root system. Some American Indians are said to have used scarlet gaura "to catch horses with." They chewed it, then rubbed the resulting mixture on their hands. It is not known how effective this was in catching horses!

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New life for old Loess Hills homestead

By [Andrew J. Nelson](#)
 WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER



KENT SIEVERS/THE WORLD-HERALD

Doug Chafa, a wildlife biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, left, and Doug Kuhlmann, director of the Monona County Conservation Board, at the Reese Homestead Project Area near Turin, Iowa. The area, which is being dedicated next weekend, includes one of Iowa's few remaining spans of natural prairie.

TURIN, Iowa — From the former homestead property in the Loess Hills above this tiny Monona County town, you can gaze across the wide expanse of the Missouri River valley to the town of Onawa and over to the bluffs of Nebraska.

To the east, you can see the plain of the Maple River valley and the cars crawling north on Iowa Highway 175 to Castana, Mapleton and beyond.

The view from here will become more accessible next weekend, when the Monona County Conservation Board and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources dedicate the longtime family-owned property as the Reese Homestead Project Area.

The 280-acre homestead, sold by the Reese family to conservationists in 2010, links three adjacent publicly accessible properties, pulling together 713 acres when combined with the neighboring Turin Preserve and Davis Wetland.

Visitors now will have easy access to all three sites, making it one of the few places in Iowa with easy public access to wetlands, grasslands and timber, said Doug Chafa, a wildlife biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

"It's quite a list of parts we have working here," he said.

The homestead project area will offer visitors an opportunity to get away for a night or a weekend at a cabin that will sleep up to eight. They also can spend a few hours hiking through the hills to birdwatch, hunt or take in the views.

The Reese family staked out the homestead in 1856. Descendants sold it in 2010 to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, which then sold it to the county conservation board and State Department of Natural Resources, which will jointly run the site.

"This land has been a spiritual home to our family for 150 years, and we feel responsible for it," said Jo Reese Nelson of Toronto, Canada, a descendant of the original stakeholder and one of four Reese siblings who sold the property. "We are delighted that this partnership will care for it and make it available for the public to enjoy as we have."

The house on the property dates to before 1880. It will be home to a county conservation board park ranger.

A large barn on the property may be renovated into a nature center with mounted animals and historic artifacts, said Doug Kuhlmann, director of the Monona County Conservation Board.

In addition to its Loess ridge lines and valleys of Cedar and Cottonwood trees, the property contains one of Iowa's few remaining spans of

natural prairie — rife with bluestem, side oat and other grasses.



"If there's 300 species of plants, there's probably a thousand kinds of insects associated with the prairie," Chafa said. "There are species we don't even know of that are in that little fraction that is remaining."

The conservation board hopes to bring in groups of schoolchildren to explore the hills, wetlands and life unique to each.

"We're preserving the hills for future generations," said Kuhlmann. "This is providing public access for the future, really, to see what was here and what is here."

Contact the writer:

402-444-1310, andrew.nelson@owh.com

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Marlene Ehresman

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation continues to help lead protection of the globally significant Loess Hills landscape, seen here from the Sylvan Runkel State Preserve in Plymouth County.

Exploring a national treasure: The Loess Hills

When people say Iowa’s Loess Hills are “globally significant,” they mean it: this landform is one of the two best examples of loess formations in the world. The only other location where the layers of loess are as deep and extensive lies 11,000 miles away in China.

The dramatic angles and bluffs of the Loess Hills stretch over 650,000 acres along the Missouri River, tracing Iowa’s western border before gently leveling out in northern Missouri. Windblown loess from receding glaciers created the hills in prehistoric times. Over millennia, weathering has created signature “catstep” hills and valleys where the fragile soil has eroded.

It’s easy to see why this landscape — home to over 49 rare native plant and animal species — is a high priority for conservation.

Over 30,000 acres in the region have been permanently protected. The highest priorities are

within Special Landscape Areas established by the National Park Service in 2002. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation turned its attention to the hills soon after its founding in 1979. Since then, INHF has helped lead efforts to protect more than 8,000 acres in the Loess Hills. INHF’s work, in partnership with the Loess Hills Alliance and other private and public entities, was recently recognized by the Department of the Interior when the Loess Hills were included in the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative. (See page 8 for more information.)

Three of INHF’s land protection projects in the northern Loess Hills are just opening for public exploration — and enjoyment: the Lloyd addition to Five Ridge Prairie State Preserve, the Chytka addition to Stone State Park and the Reese Homestead addition to the Loess Hills Wildlife Management Area.

By Olivia Young, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation Robert R. Buckmaster Communications Intern.



Brian Fankhauser

Five Ridge Prairie State Preserve grows

Picture a place where visitors can hike through woodlands, oak savannas and prairies, passing streams and beaver dams along the way. That vision describes the 156-acre Lloyd addition to Five Ridge Prairie State Preserve in Plymouth County, a natural area that’s home to more than 300 plant species, 89 birds and 20 types of mammals.

Such great diversity is rare, even in the Loess Hills. The new addition links land protected by The Nature Conservancy in Iowa to the north and west, making this area a significant, unified habitat so crucial for wildlife species that require larger, unbroken tracts of grassland to survive. The property includes a large area of remnant prairie, and partners have already started returning cropland to prairie.

“We are excited about saving and restoring this property as an example of our native landscape for future generations to enjoy and study,” said Dennis Sohl, Director of the Plymouth County Conservation Board (PCCB).

The PCCB now owns and manages the property. A public-private collaboration worked to acquire the land, including INHF and its members, Donna Lloyd, the Loess Hills Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, LeMars Sportsman’s Club and Plymouth County Pheasants Forever. Funding sources included a state Wildlife Habitat Stamp grant, a federal Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act grant, and bequests from Millie Acklin and Theodore Fariss.



Brian Fankhauser

Stone State Park expands

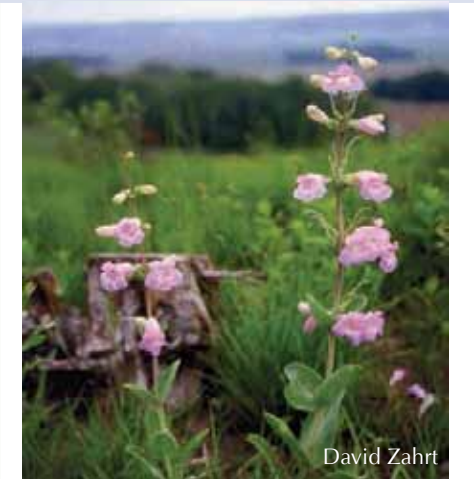
Stone State Park is known for its rugged landscape, interactive nature center and breathtaking views of the Loess Hills. The Chytka property, INHF’s eighth addition to the park, expands this haven for nature lovers at the north edge of Sioux City. The 70-acre parcel will enhance the park’s existing facilities, which include campgrounds and miles of trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding and snowmobiling.

In addition to a place to play, Stone State Park’s new land includes critical grassland habitat that will be restored to prairie, benefiting at least seven bird species of Greatest Conservation Need.

Kevin Pape, Stone State Park Ranger, said goals for the property include ecological restoration and the expansion of a bluebird trail to encourage the species to nest in the park. Visitors should also watch for increasingly rare grassland birds like the grasshopper sparrow and dickcissel.

The site’s hillside native prairie remnants also host a number of notable plant species, including silky aster, groundplum and white prairie clover.

Support for the project included INHF members, the prior landowners, private grants from the Loess Hills Alliance and Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and a state Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP) private-public Open Spaces Acquisition grant.



David Zahrt

Reese Homestead saved

Locals know the Reese Homestead north of Turin as both an idyllic bed-and-breakfast and a focal point for area conservation activities. The Monona County site boasts a National Natural Landmark designation because of its high quality prairie and distinctive Missouri River valley wetland. Its farmstead, established in 1856, is also a National Historic Landmark. Now this special place will be open to the public to hike, hunt and enjoy, as an expansion of the Loess Hills Wildlife Management Area.

INHF helped acquire the property’s 280 acres and served as interim owner for the Iowa DNR and the Monona County Conservation Board. The MCCB will own and manage the property’s historic homestead and cabin. The county plans to develop an environmental education center at the spot along the Loess Hills Scenic Byway. The partners are planning a project dedication in Spring 2012.

“We’re glad to help ensure that this bit of Loess Hills beauty and history will remain an attraction to the community and visitors,” said Craig Hartman, MCCB chair.

Special thanks go to the former landowners, descendants of Dan and Luella Reese. Major sources of support include INHF members, the Tom Richardson Family, Pheasants Forever, the National Wild Turkey Federation and the Loess Hills Alliance, as well as federal Pittman-Robertson funds and state Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Open Spaces funds.

Reflections & Remembrances

FOR THE REESE FAMILY