

**The Wild Iowa Essay Project
Sponsored by the Agrestal Fund
of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation**

The Wild Iowa Essay Project is not a contest so much as an organized opportunity for people of all ages to think and write ardently about a self-reliant, spontaneous, awe-invoking state known as wildness, specifically as it exists in Iowa.

The concept of wildness is a multi-faceted and expansive subject to explore. Wilderness aspects of this discussion could include The Wildlands Project's continuum "reconnect – restore – rewild." Beyond that are the endless possibilities of examining our own innate natures. These seemingly separate avenues of thought come together around the question of how Iowa, the land and its people, could benefit from an effort to further understand wildness, of which wilderness is only a part.

Essay and Submission Guidelines:

- Essays will be read on their own terms and within their own contexts by the Wild Iowa Essay Committee. Readers will be looking for thoughtful writing about all things wild; quality of exposition and expression; and potential contribution to furthering human wisdom in relation to understanding and experiencing wildness in Iowa. Entrants are not competing against each other.
- Essays may be submitted in "Youth" and "Adult" categories. Older youth (e.g., high school students) may self-select submission into either category.
- Essays may be any length up to 3,000 words.
- Essays may be in any form, ranging from expository to creative nonfiction.
- Essays should include a title, and each page should be numbered on the upper right hand side.
- The Committee will accept one original, previously unpublished essay per Iowan (we define that to mean anyone who has had a wild experience in Iowa). Agrestal and Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation employees, committee, and board members are not eligible.
- Essays may be submitted through January 1, 2005.

- A submitted entry should include:

A cover sheet containing the essay's title, "youth" or "adult" category designation, author's name, age (for youth entries), address, telephone number, and e-mail address if available. (Cover sheets will not be seen by the readers.)

The essay itself, including the title on the first page. (The entrant's name should not appear in the essay.)

A 50-word biography of the author at the end of the essay, not including the author's name.

- Essays will be accepted as Microsoft Word attachments until January 1, 2005 to the following e-mail address: essay@aea12.k12.ia.us. Receipt of essays will be acknowledged by e-mail reply.
- If unable to submit via e-mail, regular mail submissions should be sent to the following address:

Western Hills AEA 12/Wild Iowa Essay Submission
Attn: Dr. Bruce Hopkins
1520 Morningside Ave.
Sioux City, IA 51106

If submitting by regular mail, please include a self-addressed, stamped postcard for acknowledgement of receipt of essay.

- There is no entry fee.
- Essay submissions will not be returned to entrants. All reading results by the Essay Committee will be final. The Committee regrets that it will not be able to enter into specific discussion of essays with entrants before or after the submission date.
- Selected essays will be chosen by Essay Committee members for cash awards of up to \$300.
- Awardees will be invited to read their essays publicly during the wildness conference at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, February 20-22, 2005.
- All entrants will have their names, home communities, and essay titles published on the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation website.
- Awardees will have their full essays published on the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation website.

- Selected awarded essays will be submitted for publication consideration to *Wild Earth: The Journal of The Wildlands Project*, *Iowa Natural Heritage*, and any future Agrestal publications. Essay Committee members will provide editorial assistance before submission.
- Authors retain ownership and all other publication rights to their essays.

Wild Iowa Essay Committee:

Thomas Dean is Special Assistant to the President of The University of Iowa, responsible for speechwriting, research, reports, and other communications. He also maintains an adjunct assistant professor position with the Literature, Science, and the Arts Program, teaching such courses as “The Good Society” and “Introduction to Place Studies.” Dean founded and directs The Iowa Project on Place Studies, a UI organization that focuses on the interactions of natural, built, social, and cultural environments which comprise “place.” He received a B.M. in Music History and Literature and a B.A. and M.A. in English, all from Northern Illinois University. His Ph.D. in English is from The University of Iowa. After teaching in English and interdisciplinary departments for several years at Cardinal Stritch College (Milwaukee), Michigan State University, and Moorhead State University (Minnesota), Dean moved back to Iowa, spending a year in a position with the UI Honors Program before accepting his current position in the Office of the President. Dean has published academic and creative writing in the areas of American literature, Midwestern literature, environmental studies, and place studies. He is currently at work on a new literary history of Iowa as well as two books of personal essays on finding a home in the Midwest and his family’s North Woods experiences. He has published essays about Midwestern experience in the *Wapsipinicon Almanac* and *here: the magazine of where we are*, and he writes a regular column about living in place called “UR Here” for *Little Village*, Iowa City’s arts and culture monthly. Dean enjoys exploring the Iowa countryside with his family—his wife Susan, two children Nathaniel and Sylvia, and four retired racing greyhounds—as well as spending time in Minnesota’s North Woods wilderness near the Boundary Waters. His family also enjoys finding the balance between the cultivated and the wild in their back yard.

Jean Eells has worked in environmental education or conservation in various capacities for 25 years. While one might assume all this is a result of already having wildness figured out, it’s simply been a means of discovering more questions, particularly in wondering how others come to value wildness. Jean is interested in communications and outreach activities and encourages new enterprises in environmental work. This brings her to the Agrestal work with enthusiasm and promotion in mind. Jean lives with her husband, Chad, in rural Webster City in what is currently is the highest rated house (owner-constructed) in Iowa for energy efficiency.

Bruce Hopkins is a writer, educator and environmentalist who serves as Chief Administrator of Western Hills Area Education Agency, Sioux City, Iowa. Bruce has taught at every level of education as a teacher of Black Studies and Criminology in Nebraska and New York, as a staff member at Iowa State University and visiting professor at Colorado College and Louisiana University, Monroe. Earned degrees from Wayne State College, Wayne, Nebraska; Masters, Montana State University; Ph.D., Iowa State University. Exhibited as part of interactive art exhibits at the University of Dubuque with Francisco Liccardi, in the Hudson River Valley, Catskill Mountains of New York, and Lake Arts Center in the Adirondack Mountains with Barry Hopkins. Bruce served as Director of Human Resources for ten years for a large intermediate education agency. During the farm crisis he was appointed by the governor to the Iowa Farm Mediation Board (resolving financial disputes between farmers and creditors).

Jeanette L. Hopkins has been a middle and elementary school educator for over 20 years. She is currently an adjunct professor at Morningside College in Sioux City. Her curriculae centers on a sense of place perspective as she attempts to create an environmental ethic in her students.

In addition, as a Nationally Board Certified Teacher, she mentors student teachers in the reflective aspect of the profession. She admires the work of Rachel Carson who believed that words and pictures help you keep alive a child's inborn sense of wonder; and renews your own delight in the mysteries of earth, sea, and sky. Children need but one adult who will teach them the wonders of wildness.

Jeanette grew up on the prairie and continues to write poetry that addresses the human need for wildness and space.

Debra Marquart's poetry collection *Everything's a Verb* was published by New Rivers Press in 1995. Her work has appeared in such magazines as *New Letters*, *River City*, *Kalliope*, *Zone 3* and *The Southern Poetry Review*.

Marquart teaches creative writing at Iowa State University where she is at work on a collection of interrelated short stories about road life entitled *Playing for the Door* and a book of creative nonfictional essays about the Midwest entitled, *The Horizontal Life: Grim Tales from Dinky Towns*.

Currently, Ms. Marquart is a collaborating member of The Bone People, a jazz-poetry, rhythm & blues project with which she has recorded a CD of music (*Orange Parade*) and a CD of jazz poetry (*A Regular Dervish*).

Steve Semken has been a book publisher for over eleven years through his Ice Cube Press in North Liberty, Iowa. He is also the author of three books revolving around the natural world (River Tips and Tree Trunks; Moving With The Elements; and The Tin Prayer: Words of the Wolverine), as well as the editor for the biography of Prof. Jack Ozegovic (Northern Spirits Distilled). His writing has appeared in anthologies which focus on nature and the environment. He was the writer-in-residence with the Island Institute in Sitka, Alaska in 2000. His new books include a novel, Pick Up Stick City: Restoration Fiction (River's Bend Press, 2004), and a non-fiction work on great blue herons, The Great Blues (Woodley Press, Washburn University, 2005). Steve is the founder of the Standing By Words Center and also began the Harvest Lecture seven years ago which examines ties between our Iowa environment and ideas of spirituality. When not writing, biking, or fly fishing, he can be found roving the countryside for mushrooms, berries, hops, and other seasonal delicacies. The two loves of his life are his wife, Laura, and his favorite little kid and daughter, Fenna Marie.

Larry Stone discovered wild Iowa as a child, while playing in creeks, chasing meadowlarks, and exploring woodlots on his family's Warren County farm. Later, as outdoor writer/photographer for the *Des Moines Register* from 1972-1997, Larry traveled throughout Iowa, often finding wildness in unexpected places. His 1999 book, *Listen to the Land*, includes a sampling of those surprises.

Now a freelance writer and photographer, Larry focuses on people and places that connect Iowans to the wild. In April 2003, Larry and coauthor Jon Stravers published *Sylvan T. Runkel: Citizen of the Natural World*, a biography of a well-known Iowa naturalist. Larry also has written two books for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. They are: *Iowa: Portrait of the Land*, and *Whitetail: Treasure, Trophy or Trouble – A History of Deer in Iowa*.

Larry's work has received awards from the Iowa Wildlife Federation, the Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Iowa Sportsmen's Federation, the Iowa Division of the Izaak Walton League of America, the Association of Earth Science Editors, the International Regional Magazine Association, and the Outdoor Writers Association of America.

Larry and his wife, Margaret, live along the Turkey River near Elkader, where they daily experience the woodlands, prairies, rivers, wildlife, and weather that define the subtle wildness of Iowa.