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## Book Review: The Iowa Lakeside Laboratory: A Century of Discovering the Nature of Nature. Michael J. Lannoo.

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**The Iowa Lakeside Laboratory: A Century of Discovering the Nature of Nature.** Michael J. Lannoo. 2012. University of Iowa Press, Iowa City, Iowa, USA. 98 pages. \$19.00 (paperback). ISBN: 978-1-60938-121-9.

Iowa Lakeside Laboratory (a.k.a. Lakeside Lab) is one of several biological field stations that were established in the early 1900s and that have active educational and research programs today. Michael Lannoo's account of the history of Lakeside Lab was initiated at the centennial celebration of the lab in 2009. Lannoo's own connection with Iowa Lakeside Laboratory began as a student at Iowa State University and continues today as a member of the Lakeside Lab summer faculty and as Associate Director of Academics and Research. In his book, Lannoo describes field stations, and Lakeside Lab in particular, as educational institutions that will produce students and knowledge that will be influential in solving the environmental problems that have been caused by humans. This is a bold suggestion, but one that Lannoo convincingly addresses.

The book contains 13 chapters and four appendices. Most chapters are 2–6 pages in length, but two are longer 18-page chapters. It is nicely illustrated with historical and contemporary photographs. In the first and last chapters, Lannoo presents his argument and philosophical perspective on the importance of natural history and biological field stations for addressing the decline in biodiversity. The book begins with a contextual description of the nature of biology in the 1900s, with information about naturalists such as Aldo Leopold, Paul Errington, Edward Ricketts, and Adolph and Olaus Murie. Most of these naturalists had roots in or connections to the Midwest; several of the biological field stations that began at that time still persist today, including Lake Itasca (University of Minnesota), Douglas Lake (University of Michigan), and Iowa Lakeside Lab (state universities of Iowa). A brief history of biological field stations sets Lakeside Lab in perspective with similar field stations throughout the world. For this section, Lannoo draws on several articles that have appeared in *BioScience*, especially those written by Wyman et al. (2009), Hodder (2009) and Janovy and Major (2009), as well as earlier accounts of Lakeside Lab's history by Ziegrowsky (1985) and by Richard Bovbjerg and colleagues in two unpublished reports in 1974 and 1988.

Throughout the course of its existence, Iowa Lakeside Laboratory has addressed the dual missions of research and collegiate education, though the emphasis has shifted with changing economic, political, and academic pressures. In the early years, prior to 1920, both research and coursework thrived, but when World War I began, courses were cancelled and only a few researchers continued their work. The lab persisted and expanded with the acquisition of adjacent tracts of land. The depression years of the 1930s were a time of low attendance but remarkable growth of Lakeside Lab's infrastructure, due to the building of the stone laboratories and

sleeping cabins by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Although curricular and research activities waned again during World War II, when the war ended and students returned, the lab was in a position to support the education that students sought.

The central core of the book includes five chapters that describe the history from 1909–2007. The chapters that cover the first 20 years, from the founding in 1909 through the 1920s, are especially interesting. Lannoo has given the reader an insight into the faculty, courses, and life of students during the early 1900s by including photographs, quotes and illustrative descriptions of the campus at that time. Especially intriguing is an essay written by Maud Brown, a student in 1910, the second year that the lab offered courses, when many women attended Lakeside Lab in their long, high-necked dresses. The history of the building of the stone labs, the connection with artist and conservationist J. N. "Ding" Darling, the CCC camp at Milford, and the strong research and teaching programs of the 1930s and 1940s are recounted. The long chapter that covers the longest period of time, 1947–2007, does not have the appeal of earlier chapters. Much of the information about courses, which drags down the chapter, also is included in an Appendix and could have been omitted from the text. The transition of faculty and administration are well documented and will be useful for the historical record, but we have little sense of the lives of students during this time—a feature that made earlier chapters so interesting. The chapter on "Classical State Universities versus Land-grant Institutions" seems unnecessary and does not relate to the rest of the book.

The final three chapters give a sense of the direction of Lakeside Lab as it enters its second century. An additional mission has been added—to connect with the local community of northwest Iowa through public outreach. The establishment of the Friends of Lakeside Lab and their outreach activities are described in a brief chapter by current education coordinator, Jane Shuttleworth. University education continues as an important function of Lakeside Lab, while research activities occur but are less prominent. Many of the administrative and political struggles of the past 10 years were omitted or glossed over, leaving the reader with an incomplete background to understand the next chapter in Lakeside Lab's history. It will be up to the next person who chronicles Iowa Lakeside Laboratory to report those details.

In the final chapter, Lannoo makes a passionate appeal for the importance of natural history and the education that is provided by field stations as an essential component of our efforts to preserve biodiversity and our planet. Iowa Lakeside Laboratory has the potential to continue into the next century and contribute students who will solve environmental problems.

For readers of *The Prairie Naturalist*, this slim narrative will provide an introduction and invitation to explore Iowa Lakeside Laboratory and the great lakes region of northwest

Iowa. For those familiar with Iowa Lakeside Laboratory and the area, this book will affirm the importance of this valuable resource to the study of natural history of the region. And for those interested in the history and importance of field stations, this volume will be an important resource to document Iowa Lakeside Laboratory's successes and challenges with the other longstanding biological field stations around the globe.—*Bonnie S. Bowen, Adjunct Assistant Professor (retired), Department of Ecology, Evolution and Organismal Biology, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011, USA (and former Executive Director, Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, Regents Resource Center, Milford, Iowa 52351, USA).*

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