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Floristic Inventory  
Of the  
Amana Lily Lake Emergent and Lakeside Vegetation  
Amana, Iowa

Prepared for:

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#### Floristic Inventory Of The Emergent and Lakeside Vegetation

For

Amana Lily Lake

Prepared for:

Iowa County Soil and Water Conservation District  
Lily Lake Watershed Development Project

Prepared by:

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Iowa Valley Resource Conservation and Development  
Land Stewardship Program

#### Introduction

##### Project Location

Lily Lake is located in the NW 1/4 of section 27 and NE edge of section 28, Tier 81 N, Range 9 W, of Lenox Township in Iowa County, Iowa situated between Middle and Main Amana along 220th Trail. The Lake is located in the flood plain valley just north of the Iowa River, and encompasses approximately 200 acres in area. Amana Lily Lake is surrounded by a bike trail and is bordered by a pasture to the east that has been recently seeded to native vegetation, by the Milrace to the south, by residential homes to the west, and 220th Trail to the north. Five small intermittent tributary creeks feed into the Amana Lake and the Milrace. The project area consists of Amana Lily Lake and the perimeter surrounding the Lake, an area on the average approximately 25 feet wide and 1 mile in length.

##### Statement of Purpose

The Lily Lake Development Project is a collaborative effort to promote innovative urban soil and water conservation initiatives. The first logical step toward this goal is to acquire baseline data from a number of venues for the purpose of assessing the present status of the Lily Lake water body and to forge an action plan to promote the long-term health, quality, and conservation of the water resource within the context of the watershed. The floristic data, herein, is one of the several baseline data components critical in the analysis of the present status of the Amana Lily Lake and in devising a sustainable future vision for the lake in the context of the watershed.

##### Methods

Several documents were reviewed for initial site orientation and to familiarize us with the general character of the project area. These documents include; the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic map and the National Wetlands Inventory map of the region, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Survey of Iowa County, the General Land Office Survey, Field Notes, and Plat Maps, the 1875 Andrews township Atlas, and aerial photographs taken in 1990.

In addition, six other sources were referenced regarding the vegetation of Iowa County. These include *The Flora of Iowa County* (Easterly, 1951), *Endangered and Threatened Plants and Animal Species* (Iowa Administrative Code 1994), *Maps of Iowa 1832-1859 Vegetation* (Anderson, 1996), *Landforms of Iowa* (Pior, 1991), *Vegetation Plot Locations and Cover, Iowa River Corridor Project* (Christensen, 1996) and *The Vascular Plants of Iowa* (Eilers and Roush, 1994).

##### Field Observations

Four field visits to the site were conducted in order to collect information on the existing conditions across the project area. The method used to traverse the project area was simply to meander across the landscape and Lakeside edge so as to record the species encountered.

##### Floristic Quality Assessment

The overall floristic quality of the project area was determined through an analysis of the conservatism of the species appearing in the inventory (Drobney et al., 2000). Conservatism is defined by the confidence one has about how restricted a species is to high-quality, remnant habitats (i.e., those natural areas with intact presettlement structure, composition, and processes) (Wilhelm and Masters, 1999). Native plants of a defined geographic region exhibit an observable range of conservatism and, therefore, each may be assigned a "coefficient of conservatism" (c-value) from 0 to 10, "weedy" to "conservative".

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The overall floristic quality of an area is determined through an analysis of the species appearing in an inventory, with the mean C, or average coefficient of conservatism, determined arithmetically from the species inventory. The floristic quality index (FQI) is a statistic derived by multiplying the mean C by the square root of the number of native species recorded. If a site has a large proportion of conservative plants, the mean C and FQI values will be higher. On the contrary, if a site has a large proportion of adventive and non-conservative native species, these values will be lower and imply that the area is degraded.

##### Results and Discussion

##### Historical Context

In 1843, a survey team lead by J. Whitcher conducted the first survey and subdivision into Sections, Township 81 North, Range 9 West, of the 5<sup>th</sup> Meridian, in what was then the Iowa Territory. The surveyor described the land through which he walked in relation to the kinds of trees and its suitability for agriculture. At the end of each mile he would define the corner either by "witness trees" if suitable trees were present, or by the placement of a post or monument of rocks or charcoal. Then, he would summarize the vegetation over the whole of the line with a comment such as: "Land first rate prairie". J. Whitcher described the Amana Lily lake area in 1843 as:

Section 27 & 28  
First rate bottom  
Section 26 & 27  
Section 27 & 28  
1st rate bottom, a little timber along the stream  
Enter Prairie E and W North of River  
1st rate bottom  
Section 27 & 34  
1st rate bottom  
Section 28 & 33  
1st rate prairie bottom

His township summary of Lenox township:

This is a very good Township, there is a good proportion of timber. There are some settlements on the River. The soil is very good, it is susceptible of a large population.

Amana Lily Lake was created during the 1880's, some time after the milrace was constructed and the levy broke and flooded what had been a marshland area as displayed in early General Land Surveyor maps. Previous to the formation of the present day Lily lake the area was known by early settlers as the "swamp or marshland" and utilized extensively in 1870's for harvesting grasses (Hickey, pers. comm.)

In geological context, Amana Lily lake is located between the Iowa River floodplain to the south and wooded uplands to the north, which are characterized by remnant alluvial terraces, underlain by water deposited materials occurring above the modern Lily lake area. The lake has a rounded shape reminiscent of an ancient oxbow of the Iowa River. The drainage of the small five intermittent tributaries in combination of the occasional flood waters of the Iowa River, may have been historically important sources of upland sediments and silt.

Perhaps a prehistoric meander loop in the Iowa River existed near the location of the present-day Lily Lake. In more recent time, the Amana Lily Lake seems to have been intermittently occupied by Iowa River during high flood events which in effect, would have scoured out the existing topographic shape surrounding the pond.

##### Floristic Inventory

Information on the vegetation was gathered during four field visits conducted June 4th, June 11th, June 14th, September 9, 2011. A list of the plants recorded across the project area is included on page 7. Also included with the species list is a summary of the floristic quality data. A total of 224 species were recorded, 167 of which are native (75%) with a mean C of 2.8 and FQI of 36. The floristic quality assessment data was based upon assigned values for Iowa. The results indicate that a significant proportion of the Lake area represent quality, remnant plant communities. Some areas are highly modified from their presettlement conditions and are dominated by non-native plants. Although based upon visits to the site during just the



