

MARCH 8, 2021

PANELIST BIOSKETCHES

Rich Iovanna is an Agricultural Economist with the Natural Resources and Conservation Service, part of the USDA mission area on Farm Production and Conservation. He has conducted extensive work on the conservation programs of the Farm Bill. Prior to joining USDA in 2006, he was an economist for the Environmental Protection Agency. Rich received a Masters of Public Affairs from Princeton University in 1996 and a B.S. in economics from Penn State University in 1985.

Bryan Pratt is a Research Agricultural Economist in the Conservation and Environment Branch at ERS. His research focuses on behavioral and experimental economics, particularly as they relate to conservation programs. Dr. Pratt received his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of California, Santa Cruz, in 2019 and his Bachelor's degree in International Affairs and Economics from George Washington University in 2013. Prior research includes work studying the behavior of residential water consumers in response to drought policies, particularly demand management.

Laura Jackson grew up surrounded by prairie, wheat and pasture in the Smoky Hills region of north-central Kansas. She received a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Grinnell College, and a Ph.D. in Plant Ecology from Cornell University. Professor Jackson has been a UNI Biology faculty member since 1993, teaching courses in conservation biology, restoration ecology and environmental studies. Her research has focused on the restoration of biological diversity in agriculture landscapes, and the dynamics of seeds and seedling establishment in tallgrass prairie restoration. Laura has served on several advisory boards including the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture (2001-2012), the Iowa State Preserves Board, and Monarch Joint Venture. She is co-editor, with Dana Jackson, of *The Farm as Natural Habitat: Reconnecting Food Systems with Ecosystems*. (2002, Island Press).

Justin Meissen joined the Tallgrass Prairie Center staff in July 2016 to lead the Research and Restoration Program. Justin is responsible for implementing restoration research and demonstration projects, creating training seminars, giving presentations, and developing technical materials for multiple audiences including roadside managers and other conservation professionals. He has a PhD in Conservation Biology from the University of Minnesota and a BS in Integrative Biology from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. Justin has worked professionally in restoration ecology and botany from North Carolina to California with The Nature Conservancy, The Audubon Society, and other non-profits and environmental contractors. His PhD research at the University of Minnesota evaluated the risks of repeated, intensive seed harvest from native tallgrass prairies to supply large-scale prairie restoration. The research, conducted in western Minnesota, involved extensive collaboration with the Minnesota DNR, The Nature Conservancy, and private landowners. Justin is also an avid nature photographer whose work can be found throughout the web, particularly on his Flickr page.

Kristine Nemec joined the Tallgrass Prairie Center staff in 2015. She is the statewide coordinator for county roadside programs, providing training and education for Iowa's county roadside programs, and conducting outreach to raise awareness of the value of roadside programs. Previously she worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Omaha, where she developed and implemented ecosystem restoration plans, and the U.S.D.A. Agricultural Research Service in Brookings, South Dakota where she researched pollinator use of biofuel oilseed crops. Kristine received a B.S. in Environmental Studies

(1999) and an M.A. in Biology (2003) from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and a Ph.D. in Natural Resource Sciences from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2012).

Laura Fischer Walter received her BS (Biology) and MS (Plant Ecology) from Kansas State University. She is a former teacher of high school science and German. She is an amateur photographer and enjoys gardening with native plants. In January 2019, Laura Walter joined the Tallgrass Prairie Center full time as the Plant Materials Program Manager.