

What Are Hill Prairies?

110 words



The Driftless Area (a place untouched by glaciers), was historically covered in prairie and savanna. Today, less than 1/10 of 1% of the area's original prairies remain. Much of the remaining prairies in the Driftless Region are hill prairies. These prairies were spared as they were difficult to plow. However, they are now considered "Globally Rare" due to a loss of fire on the landscape. This loss of fire allows woody trees and brush to invade, shading out sun-loving native species.

Hill prairies (sometimes called goat or bluff prairies) are typically found on south and southwest facing slopes. These hot, dry areas support unique animals like reptiles, butterflies and more.

Coulee Region Chapter clearing brush at a Brownsville, Minnesota bluff. Photo by Laurie Arzaga.

Prairies Need Your Care

The Prairie Enthusiasts seek to ensure the perpetuation and recovery of prairie, oak savanna, and other associated ecosystems of the Upper Midwest through protection, management, restoration, and education. In doing so, we strive to work openly and cooperatively with private landowners and other private and public conservation groups.



Learn More & Get Involved at:
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The accreditation seal is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

Cover photo of Marowski Bluff Prairie, a hill prairie protected by the Coulee Region Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts. Photo by Jim Rogala.

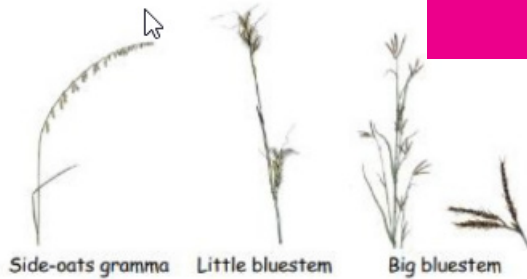


Fire-Dependent Habitat

Hill Prairies of the Driftless Area

Common Plants

Would be either illustration
OR photos. Not both. Not sure
if we can get permission from
an artist.



Side-oats gramma

Little bluestem

Big bluestem



Leadplant



Silky aster



Purple prairie clover



Coreopsis



Pasque flower



Grey goldenrod



False boneset



Stiff goldenrod



Rough blazingstar

Illustrations by Mark Muller.

Common Wildlife



Prairie racerunner. Photo by Natalie McNear.



Wing snaggleteeth snail.
Photo by Gould.



Grasshopper sparrow.
Photo by Eric Preston.



Timber rattlesnake. Photo by Brian Bielema.

Management Practices

140 words

There is no standard method for restoring a hill prairie. One or more of the following methods can be used to maintain or expand a hill prairie. Method selection depends on the remnant condition and the management objective. Threats to these habitats include red cedar, aspen, sumac, invasive brush and other invasive plants like sweet clover.

Prescribed Burning

Benefits of a prescribed burn include reducing thatch layer, promoting soil warming and killing or setting back trees and brush.

Girdling Trees

Girdling is the removal of the outer bark, thus starving the tree over a period of a year or two.

Cutting Trees and Brush

Simply cutting some species of trees and brush will not provide desired results over the long-term and may need herbicide.

Herbicides

When mechanical control methods are not successful, herbicides can be used toward specific goals.