



MAROWSKI BLUFF PRAIRIE

A Site Protected by The Prairie Enthusiasts and Stewarded by Our Coulee Region Chapter



Bird's foot violet (*Viola pedata*)

FUN FACT

These steep prairies have many names: bluff prairies, hill prairies, prairie openings and goat prairies.



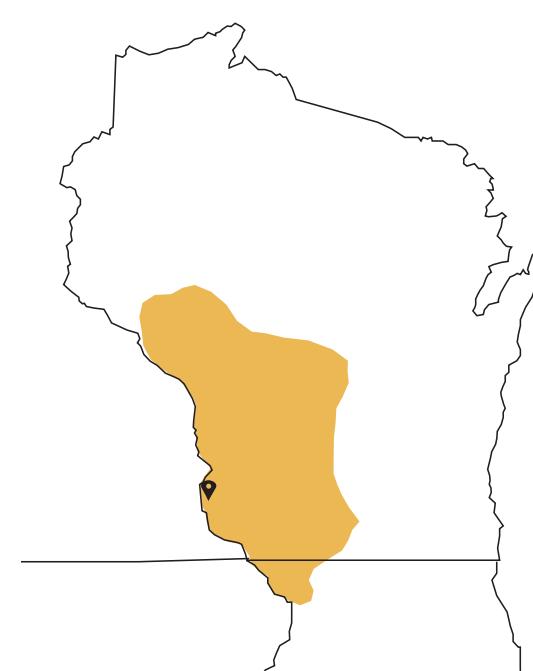
Purple prairie clover
(*Dalea purpurea*)



Sideoats grama
(*Bouteloua curtipendula*)

PRAIRIES AND THE DRIFTLESS AREA

Portions of Wisconsin and Illinois were never covered by glaciers during the last ice age. This region, called the Driftless Area, lacks glacial drift (clay, sand, gravel, etc.), and is characterized by steep hills, river valleys and ridges. Much of the area historically consisted of habitats that evolved with fire and require a continual practice of prescribed fire. These fire-dependent habitats, such as prairies, were historically maintained by Indigenous Peoples. Unfortunately, less than 1% of the original prairies remain today due to the lack of fire, agriculture and urbanization. The surviving habitats, called remnants, are irreplaceable as they harbor some plants and animals that can only live in these specialized ecosystems. Because so few fire-dependent habitats remain—and more continue to slip away everyday—it's increasingly urgent to protect and steward what's left.



SAVING A RARE PRAIRIE

In 2023, The Prairie Enthusiasts acquired this site from Dr. Christopher Marowski, who donated half the value of the property and contributed to a land management endowment for future restoration on the prairie. Dr. Marowski previously bought the 11-acre property with the intent of building on the site; however, being knowledgeable of natural areas in Wisconsin, he realized the importance of keeping this habitat intact. He decided to preserve this beautiful area for generations to come.



The Prairie Enthusiasts

A good way to learn about prairies and other rare habitats is to get involved with us! You can learn about native wildlife at a field trip, gain experience with restoration equipment and techniques at a work party, and build connections with your community. Whatever your skills or schedule, we invite you to join our active community and transform your love for nature into action.

ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org

Driftless Area information from the 2023 Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey

FIND THESE PLANTS

As you look out over the steep slopes, enjoy some of these common bluff prairie plants.



Cylindric blazing star
(*Liatris cylindracea*)



Grey Goldenrod
(*Solidago nemoralis*)



Coreopsis
(*Coreopsis palmata*)



Silky aster
(*Symphotrichum sericeum*)



Hoary puccoon
(*Lithospermum canescens*)



Lead plant
(*Amorpha canescens*)



Little bluestem
(*Schizachyrium scoparium*)



Volunteers conducting a prescribed burn on a bluff prairie Photo by Justin Nooker.

PRAIRIE ISLANDS

The Importance of Archipelagos

WHAT IS AN ARCHIPELAGO

The term archipelago (ar-kuh-PEL-uh-goh) usually refers to a group or chain of islands in a body of water. However, it can also be used to describe a string of bluff prairie remnants typically found on south- to southwest-facing slopes. These prairie “islands” are separated by wooded areas where trees have overgrown the prairie because of the lack of fire.

WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT

Old-growth prairie, also called remnants, are what is left of the prairies that once covered much of the landscape in the Driftless Area and are now often small and isolated. Because these habitats are small and isolated, the rare species that live there are at a high risk of being lost due to natural or human-made causes. Additionally, the isolation can result in inadequate genetic exchange across populations leading to an increased risk of extinction. Marowski Bluff Prairie contributes to the number of prairie islands in the Ferryville archipelago, thereby increasing the chance for genes and species to move between prairie islands.

