

1 You might see shorter grasses, mulch piles, and plant cages as you enter the prairie. This addition was begun in 2009 and has continued through 2013.

2 Tall plants are all around you - can you tell them apart? Look for a "turkey foot" at the tip of one of the tallest grasses. That's Big Bluestem, one of our state symbols.

3 Visitors get aerial views from the observation deck. Can you recognize the newer and older sections of the prairie?

4 Yellow flowers are everywhere in the mid-summer prairie, but Compass Plants stand out. Look for deeply-cut, jagged leaves that usually point north and south. By July, it may tower 10ft above the trail. Can you see it?

5 If you're at this stop in late summer, look for the bell-shaped purple flowers of the Obedient Plant. Hummingbirds, bees, and other pollinators are attracted to its sweet nectar.

6 Small, flat compound leaves and soft yellow flowers make the Partridge Pea seem cute, but don't be fooled. This annual plant has roots tough enough to prevent soil erosion.

7 There is a dip in the landscape here and a temperature drop. You just entered the swale, an area that is lower, moister and cooler than the rest of the prairie. One of the taller more abundant plants is the Water Hemlock.

8 Stop, Look, and Listen. Can you see and hear a Red-Winged Blackbird?

9 Entrance to the Memorial Wood Trail (a good way to escape the mid-summer heat)

10 The head of a Rattle Snake Master looks like a spiky ball. Have you seen it? The plant got its name from pioneers who believed the root could cure snakebites. (It can't.)

11 The deep roots of a Prairie Dock plant keeps it hydrated even in drought. Watch for its tall yellow flowers and huge heart shaped leaves. If you touch one of its sandpapery leaves, you might notice that it feels cool.

12 Fire is an important part of a prairie ecosystem. Prescribed burning during dormant seasons turns old vegetation into nutrient-rich ash, frees up space for spring growth, and holds back invasive species. Can you see evidence of a past burn?

13 Unlike other prairie plants that can stand over 10ft tall, you'll find Prairie Phlox closer to the ground. In late spring/early summer, look for small violet petals with a star shape in the middle.

14 Although volunteers manage this land by weeding and mowing, nature ultimately decides "what goes where". Plants adapt when space opens up, or when it closes, or when sunlight is let in, or kept out. Each new factor in the environment lets one species thrive, while another declines. This everlasting process is called succession, and it's what makes the prairie work. Take notes of what you see here. When you come back, you will see the pattern.



2213 South Levis Lane
Godfrey, IL 62035
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Heartland Prairie at North Gordon Moore Park Trail Guide

The Mark W. Hall Interpretive Trail is 1/2 mile long with numbered markers relating to the information in this guide.



Across from Main Entrance to Gordon Moore Park
4550 College Ave
Alton, IL 62002



Heartland Prairie was started in 1977 as a partnership between the City of Alton and The Nature Institute. Volunteers included founders of The Nature Institute and Sierra Club members. They cleared the land, planted seeds, and nurtured the prairie into what it is today.

Now, there are over 150 native plants and animals that call Heartland Prairie home. Today only about 1% of original prairie remains in Illinois. Restorations like this one help to create more of this important habitat.

By protecting the prairie, we protect our own history. We protect the wildlife, plants around us, and the health of our planet. The simple act of creating a backyard with native plants is one way to begin.

Learn more about using native plants in your yard by contacting The Nature Institute by email or phone.



Heartland Prairie Trail Map

- Interpretive Sign
- Mark W. Hall Interpretive Trail
- Prairie Edge Trail
- North & South Trails
- Memorial Wood Trail
- Connector Trail
- Roads
- Heartland Property



0 312.5 625 1,250 Feet

Sources: Esri, Airbus-DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodatastyreisen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community, Maxar

