

A vibrant prairie field with purple and yellow flowers in the foreground and a building in the background.

**Frank Mayfield**

**The James Woodworth Prairie Preserve:**  
**A MONOGRAPH**

a part of the  
**University of Illinois at Chicago**  
**(UIC)**

**The Collector's Edition**



Prairie is the name used in North America for the Grassland Biome. All prairies have grasses. This species *Panicum leibergii* PRAIRIE PANIC GRASS is one of the two most common grasses at the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve. *Panicum leibergii* PRAIRIE PANIC GRASS is a cool season grass, growing primarily in spring and fall and flowering in late spring.



This species *Sporobolus heterolepis* PRAIRIE DROPSEED is the other one of the two most common grasses at the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve. *Sporobolus heterolepis* PRAIRIE DROPSEED is a warm season grass growing primarily in summer and flowering in late summer.

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## PEOPLE OF NOTE IN THE HISTORY OF THE JAMES WOODWORTH PRAIRIE PRESERVE

One of the most important groups of people connected with the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve are the volunteers, those who rallied to help initially save this prairie, and those who keep showing up for prescribed burn management, for special projects, and for pot-luck dinners to hear updates and discuss concerns. Without these volunteers, the *Friends of Woodworth Prairie*, there would be no James Woodworth Prairie Preserve.



Bernice Popelka  
President,  
Peacock Prairie  
Preservation Project  
1965-1968



Ev Tyner  
Professor of Biological  
Sciences  
Northeastern Illinois  
University  
Photographer,  
Peacock Prairie  
Preservation Project  
1965-1968



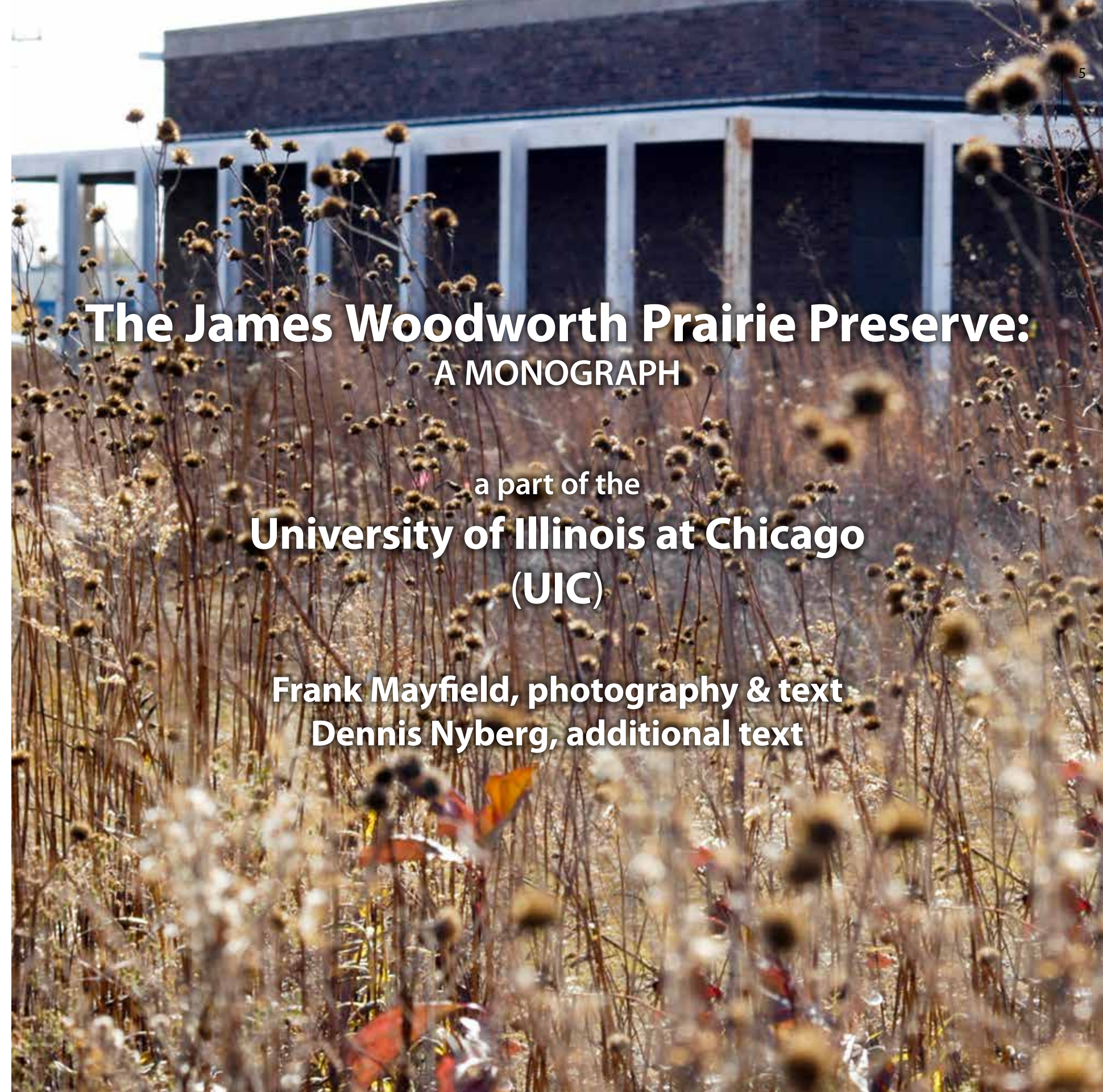
Al Rouffa  
Professor of Biological  
Sciences  
University of Illinois at  
Chicago  
Director, James  
Woodworth Prairie  
Preserve, 1968-1999



Dennis Nyberg  
Professor of Biological  
Sciences  
University of Illinois at  
Chicago  
Director, James  
Woodworth Prairie  
Preserve, 2000-2013



James Woodworth  
Mayor of Chicago, 1848-1850



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# The James Woodworth Prairie Preserve: A MONOGRAPH

a part of the  
**University of Illinois at Chicago  
(UIC)**

**Frank Mayfield, photography & text  
Dennis Nyberg, additional text**

# THE JAMES WOODWORTH PRAIRIE PRESERVE:

## AN INTRODUCTION

This monograph is a collection of photo images and maps that were published in the four book *Splendor Series*. This series is a photo-documentation of the flora (and some fauna) of a tallgrass prairie located in northeast Illinois, three miles from the northwest city limits of Chicago. Other images included in this monograph are from a short slide show used to 'talk about' the **James Woodworth Prairie Preserve** during in-person presentations to various interested groups. This collection now allows anyone access to all these images in a shortened, monograph format.

The **James Woodworth Prairie Preserve** is a 'gem' in the necklace of urban wilderness that runs through the Chicago and Cook County area. *It was not until 1968 that a nature preserve was created in Illinois solely because it was a piece of prairie.* That preserve is **The James Woodworth Prairie Preserve**. Considered at the time by many in Cook County (and in Illinois state government) to be too small, and too costly, to preserve, the effort was nonetheless undertaken, primarily by three suburban women: Bernice Popelka (the leader), Ev Tyner (the photographer), and Marion Cole (the botanist). These three women, from 1965 to 1968, by trial and error, stopped then-current commercial development on the target parcel of land, lobbied major decision makers for its preservation, and ended up with a Federal government grant, matched by a private grant, to purchase and establish **the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve**. The fascinating story of the political efforts of this group is related in full by Bernice Popelka in her book: *Saving Peacock Prairie* (2010).

George Peacock registered 125 acres of land as his farm in 1843. In this area of Cook County, he was the first to register his farm with the State of Illinois after northern Illinois was legally opened to farming. He never plowed ten of his wettest acres, and very soon his neighbors began calling this unplowed patch **Peacock Prairie**.

After the Peacock Prairie was saved from suburban development in 1968 by purchase from McIntosh & Co. for \$230,000.<sup>00</sup>. The money came through a combined Federal grant and private funding from Chicago Community Trust through the Openlands conversation group. Peacock Prairie was deeded to the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) in exchange for the

University providing a Director and using the prairie preserve, in part, as an open-air classroom for Master's and Doctor's degree students in Biological Sciences. The first task faced by the University was to increase security for the site by building a six-foot chain-link fence to keep out people wanting to dump garbage and occasional shovel-wielding 'native plant thieves.' The next task was to build an Interpretation Center to serve public visitors. Both these tasks required money, which the new prairie preserve did not have. After a number of inquiries were made, the family of John S. Leslie (then CEO of Signoide Corporation, a specialized packaging company) donated \$200,000.<sup>00</sup> for the fence and Interpretation Center and named the new prairie preserve after his great-grandfather, James H. Woodworth, Mayor of Chicago (1848-1850). The intent of the Leslie family was to honor their great-grandfather by associating his name with a piece of land that today looks as most of Cook County, including most of Chicago, looked at the time James H. Woodworth was Chicago's Mayor.

James Woodworth was a member of the Woodworth political family, a collection of American and Canadian politicians who descend directly from colonial settler Walter Woodworth. He settled in the Plymouth Colony (in present day Massachusetts), coming from Kent, England in 1633. His descendants rose to prominence in the 19th century, serving in several United States state legislatures, in the United States House of Representatives, the United States Senate, the Canadian House of Commons, and also producing America's first Surgeon General. In the modern era, two United States Presidents claim genealogical descent from Walter Woodworth.

In addition to an amazing political pedigree, **The James H. Woodworth Prairie Preserve** has inspired, to date, five books. The first, Bernice Popelka's *Saving Peacock Prairie*, my two books: *Abundant Splendor*, and *Elusive Splendor*, both dealing with *Wildflowers of the Tallgrass Prairie*, and Charlotte Adelman & Bernard Schwartz's *Prairie Directory of North America* and *The Midwestern Native Garden – An Illustrated Guide to Native Alternatives to Nonnative Flowers and Plants*. (See the select bibliography at the rear of this Monograph for purchase information.) Over thirty research projects have been conducted on the **Peacock Prairie** at the **James H. Woodworth**

**Prairie Preserve**. Fifteen of those were considered valuable enough to be published by scientific journals. This amount of literary and scientific output is indeed unusual for five and one quarter acres of grassland.

But, on second thought, not really. As Bernice Popelka states in *Saving Peacock Prairie*, after she quotes Ray Schulenberg, Curator of Plants at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois: "Peacock Prairie is a rare jewel. It must be saved, because it has all the insects, soil microorganism, and invertebrates that only exist on virgin prairie. What I am doing here (at the Arboretum's prairie restoration) can not match what has evolved over thousands of years.' *I could hear the passion in his voice, and it lit a fire within me* [emphasis added]." The five and one quarter acres of **The James Woodworth Prairie Preserve** contains about 160 species of wildflowers native to this tallgrass prairie. It contains about 40 species of grasses native to this tallgrass prairie. This prairie remnant is a gem, it is rare, and its splendor is overwhelming. On many levels, it is truly inspirational.

February 5, 2013

*Frank Mayfield*



**Lobelia spicata** PALE SPIKED LOBELIA



**Viola pedatifida** PRAIRIE VIOLET



**Rosa carolina** PASTURE ROSE



**Penstemon digitalis**  
FOXGLOVE BEARD TONGUE

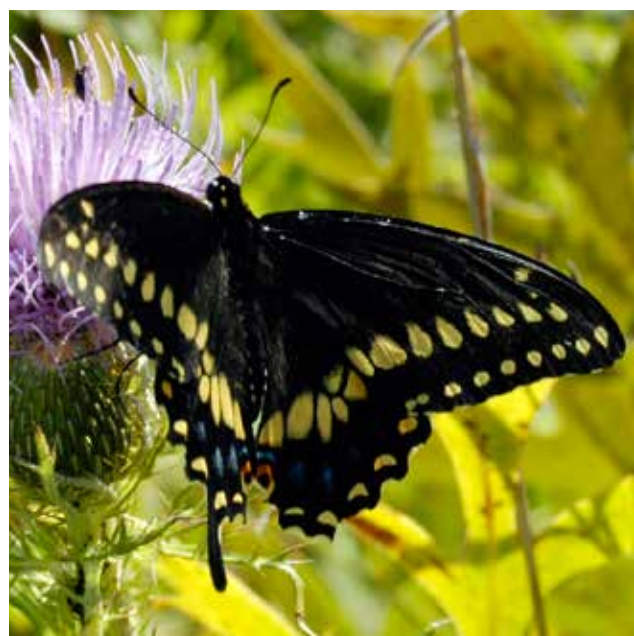
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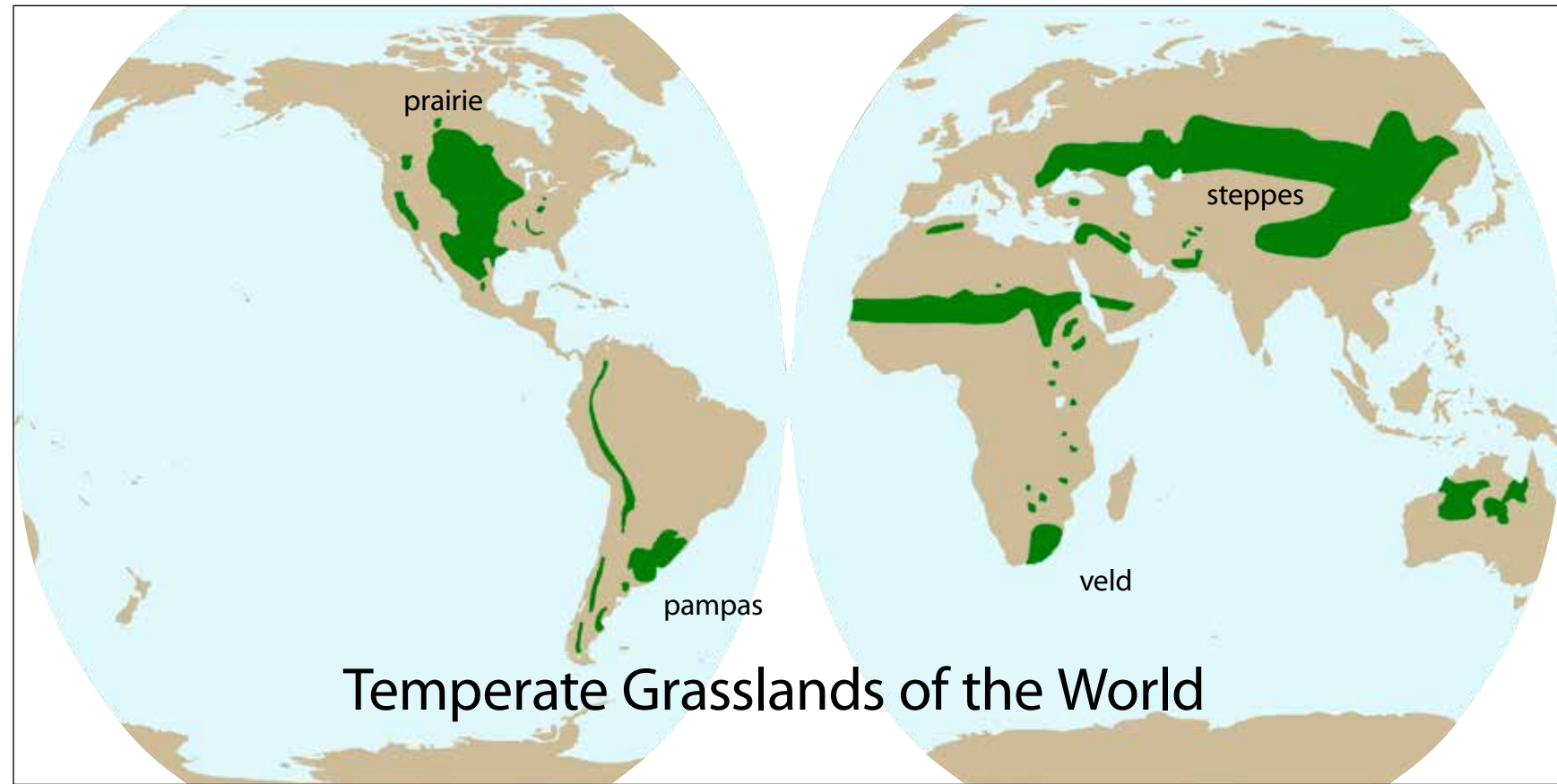
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### A SAMPLE OF PRAIRIE WILDLIFE FROM THE JAMES WOODWORTH PRAIRIE PRESERVE

There are many species of animal wildlife on the prairie. Many are nocturnal, so they don't normally appear before my camera lens. Some, such as the 17-Year Cicada directly below, are active during the day. If an animal or insect just happens to be on a flower that I am working on, I will attempt to capture a good image. Sometimes, I have captured an image of a flower, and on later examination find that I had also captured an image of some form of wildlife. At any rate, whether the image was captured on purpose or not, these images represent some of the animals and insects I have come into contact with during this project.





## Temperate Grasslands of the World

There are a number of different ways to study the earth's biomes, areas on the earth with similar climate, plants, and animals<sup>1</sup>. In our first three or four years of schooling, most of us were exposed to forests, grasslands, desert, and tundra. We probably came across them while looking at a map of climate types. One of these climate types is

grasslands (ecologically, a biome). On one level, grasslands are simple: if it's too wet to be a desert, but not wet enough to be a forest, then you are in an area that grows mainly grasses and forbs (flowering plants with non-woody stems, that is, wildflowers). As a person studies the grasslands biome, however, it begins to get complicated.

<sup>1</sup> Temperate **Grasslands of the World** map adapted from a map in Candace Savage: *Prairie: A Natural History* (Vancouver, Canada: Greystone Press, 2004) page 5, which was adapted from maps in R.T. Coupland, ed., *Grassland Ecosystems of the World: Analysis of Grasslands and Their Uses*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). The digital base map of the world is copyright: Map Resources.



**Antennaria neglecta** CAT'S FOOT



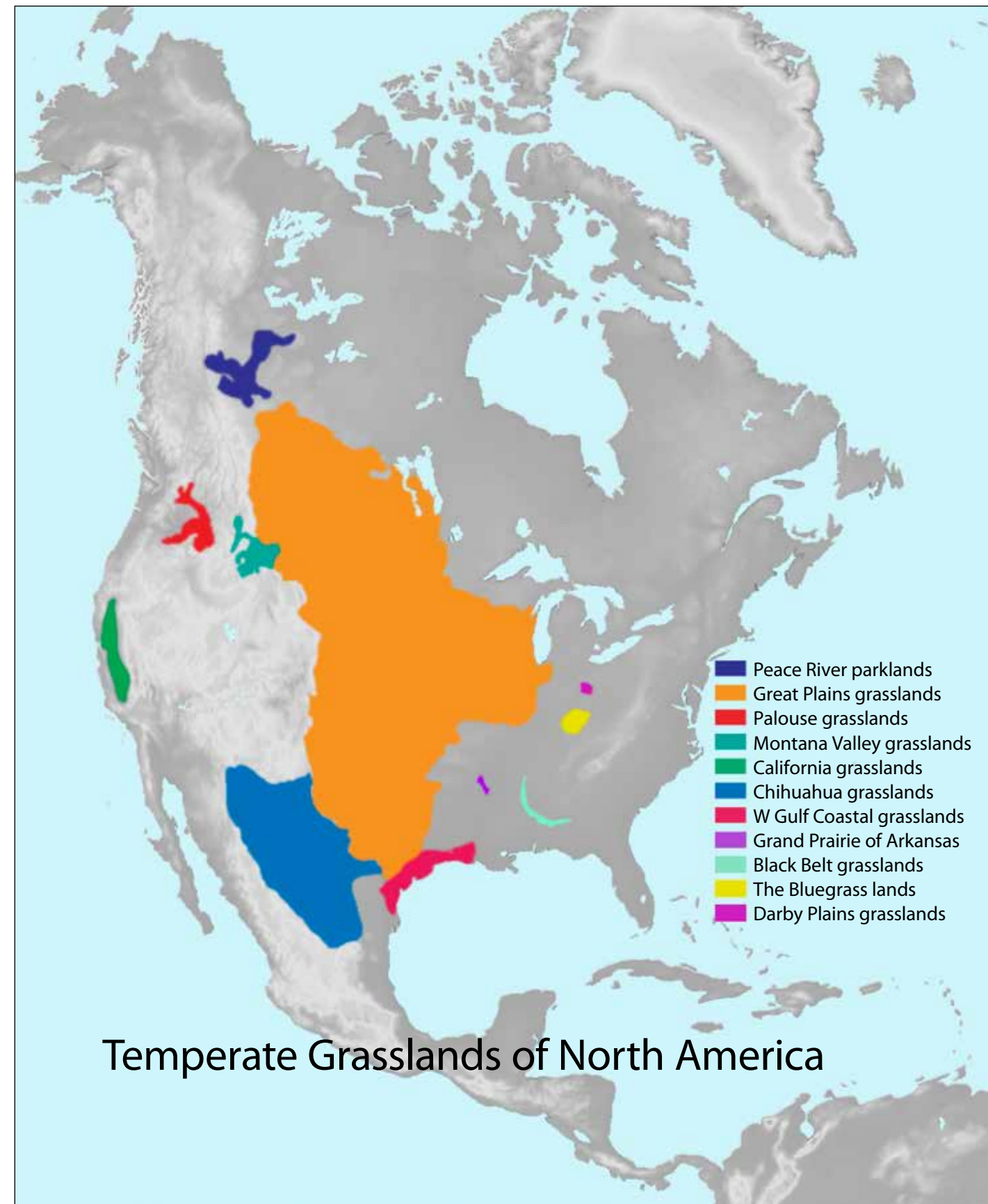
**Apocynum sibiricum**  
PRAIRIE INDIAN HEMP



**Amorpha canescens** LEAD PLANT



**Arenaria lateriflora**  
WOOD SANDWORT

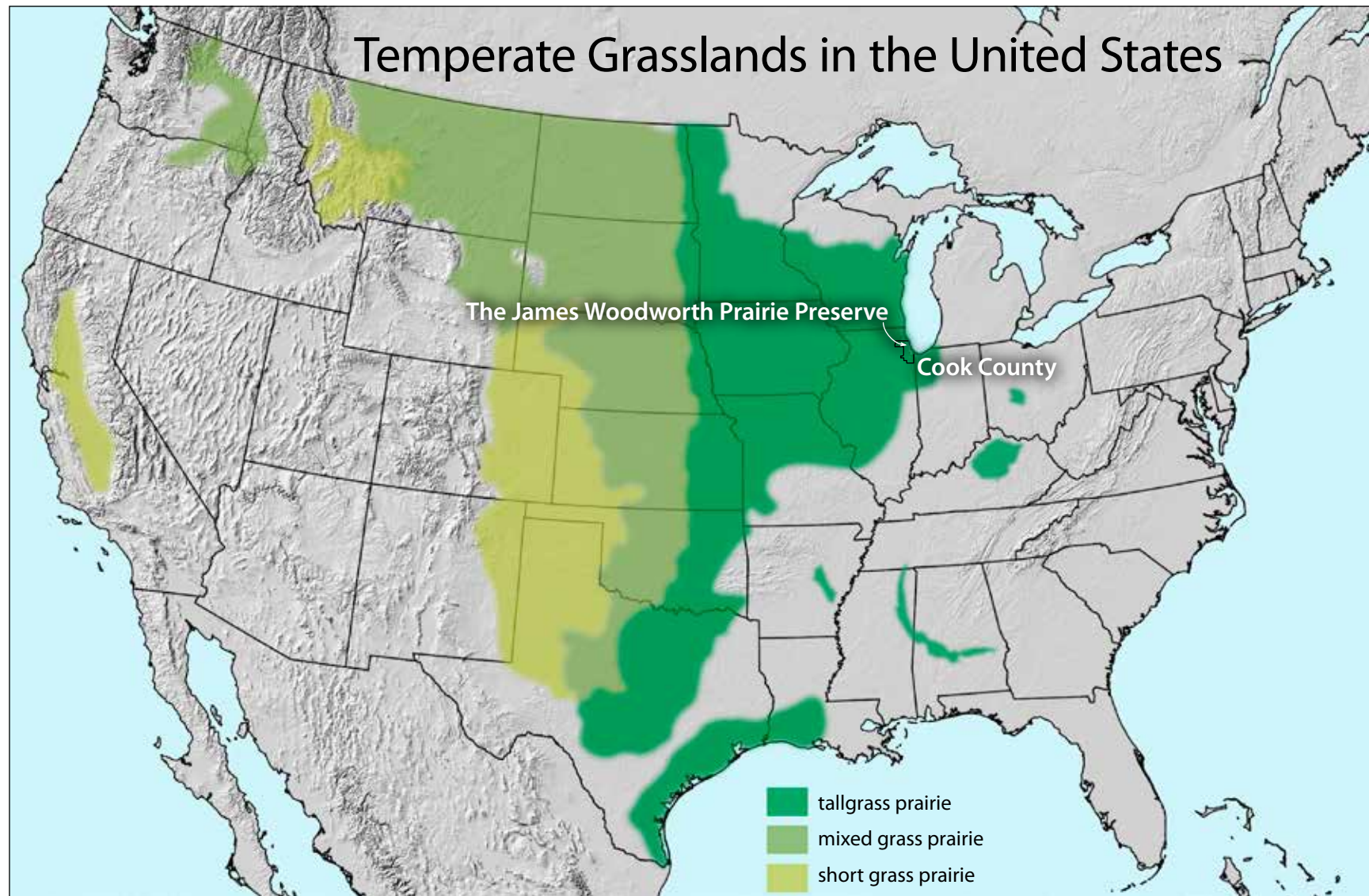


## Temperate Grasslands of North America

When European settlers began to inhabit North America, they had never seen an immense grassland; most had seen only meadows (forest clearings). Not knowing how vast the North American grasslands were, early French explorers simply used their word for a forest meadow - prairie - to describe these grasslands.

Depending on the classification system used, there are many ways to characterize the ecoregions of the world<sup>1</sup>. The North American continent has dozens of different ecoregions (according to which of the classification systems is used).

<sup>1</sup> **Temperate Grasslands of North America** map adapted from two maps: 1) in Candace Savage: *Prairie: A Natural History* (Vancouver, Canada: Greystone Press, 2004) page 6, which was adapted from maps in **Temperate Grasslands and Savannas of Canada and the United States** in Taylor H. Ricketts, et al., *Terrestrial Ecoregions of North America: A Conservation Assessment* (Washington, D.C., U.S.A.: Island Press, 1999), and 2) in Martha Desmond & Jennifer A. Montoya, *Status and Distribution of Chihuahuan Desert Grasslands in the United States and Mexico* (USDA Forest Service Proceedings RMRS-P-40. 2006) page 18. The digital base map of North America is copyright: Map Resources.



Climate conditions create the vast grasslands on the interior of north America, and the differences between tallgrass, short grass, and mixed grass prairie are based primarily on available water.

The map above combines about 15 temperate grasslands ecoregions into three broad, rough classifications.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, if you physically go, for example, to the tallgrass region, you will mainly find tallgrasses growing. (Since there is no completely agreed on definition of tallgrass prairie, no matter which way the map above is drawn, some will argue for different boundaries.)

Of course, in each of the prairies indicated above, there are exceptions. Along rivers you will often find forests, no matter what the

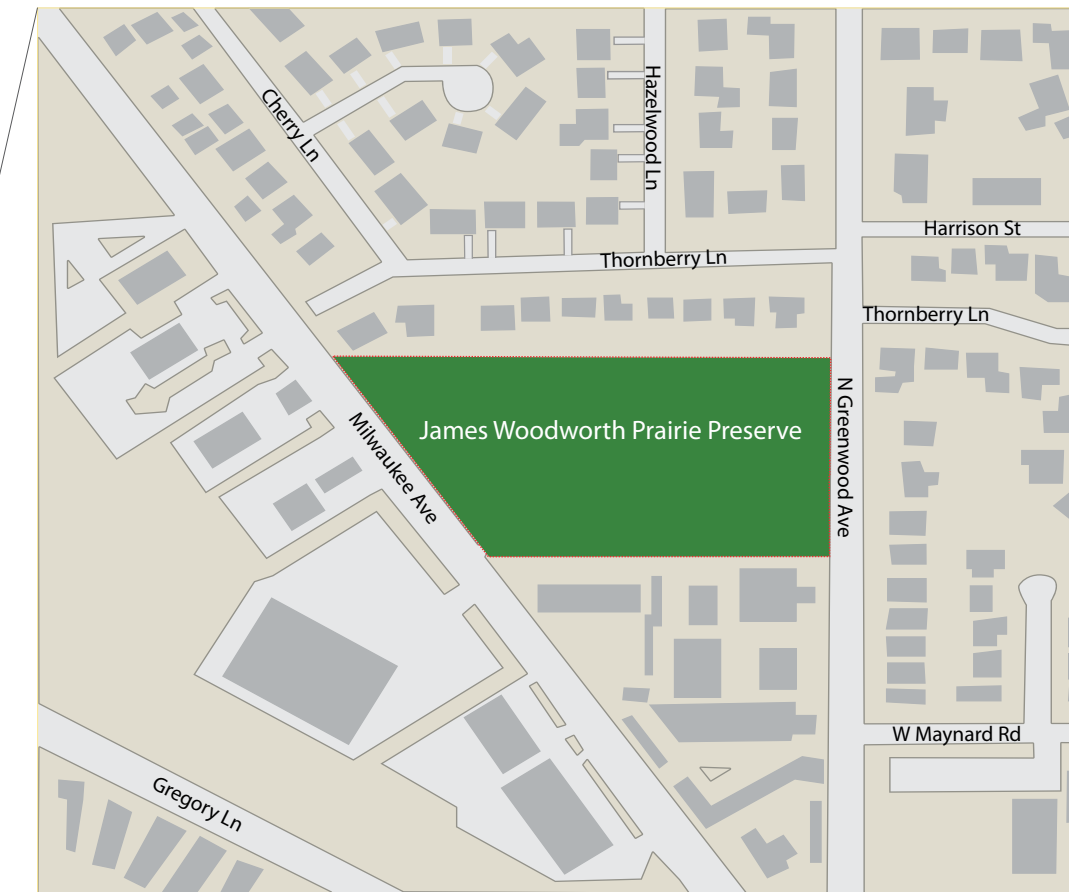
predominant climate is. In wetland areas (areas with poor drainage) you will often find trees growing around lakes and ponds. In oak and prairie transitions zones (savannas) you will find groves of trees surrounded by prairie grass. In places inhabited by man, you may find nothing growing, as in parking lots, or worse you may find landscaping with commercially available plants growing (commercial landscaping is actually more destructive than paving because many of the non-native plants used escape into the prairie) ... And so it goes. The map above is simply an indicator of the predominant grasses you will find in the prairies that historically dominated these regions.

<sup>1</sup> *Temperate Grasslands in the United States* map adapted from two maps in Candace Savage: *Prairie: A Natural History* (Vancouver, Canada: Greystone Press, 2004) pages 6 and 23, which were adapted from the maps *Temperate Grasslands and Savannas of Canada and the United States*, and *Ecoregions of the Great Plains*, both in Taylor H. Ricketts, et al., *Terrestrial Ecoregions of North America: A Conservation Assessment* (Washington, D.C., U.S.A.: Island Press, 1999). The digital base map of the United States is copyright: Map Resources.



*Erigeron strigosus* DAISY FLEABANE

Illinois has about 13 million inhabitants. About 9.7 million of them live in the Chicagoland metropolitan area, which is comprised of Chicago and its suburbs. Chicago is completely located in Cook County, but Chicago suburbs extend into the surrounding six counties. About 3 million people live in Chicago itself. The James Woodworth Prairie Preserve is located about 17 miles northwest of the Chicago city center.



The graphic above, based on a mid-1990's satellite image, was created by, and is courtesy of, Matt Mayfield.



**JAMES WOODWORTH PRAIRIE PRESERVE**

The James Woodworth Prairie Preserve is in Cook County, Illinois, just three miles northwest of the Chicago city limits. It is surrounded by typical suburban development. This prairie remnant is about 13 house lots long (about 269 yards) by about 6 house lots wide (about 113 yards) or roughly 4 football fields stacked side-by-side (long sides touching).

Street location / Emergency 911 address:  
**9831 N Milwaukee Ave, Glenview, Illinois**

Global coordinates:  
**42.0595°N, 87.8424°W (42.0595, -87.8424)**

United States Postal Service address:  
**Director, James Woodworth Prairie Preserve  
845 W. Taylor St, Chicago, IL 60607**

Web address:  
**<http://www.uic.edu/depts/bios/prairie>**

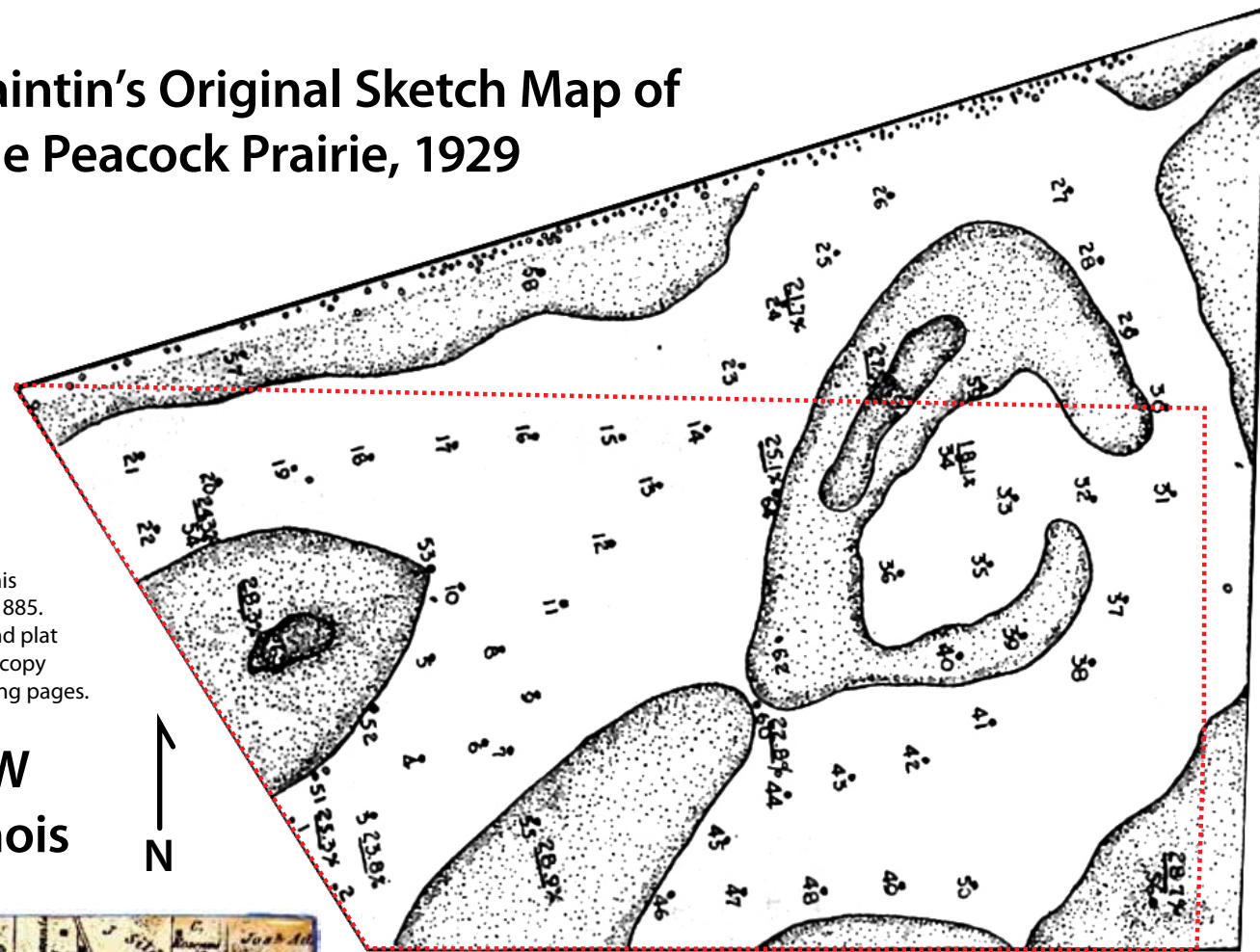


*Allium cernuum*  
NODDING WILD ONION

# Paintin's Original Sketch Map of the Peacock Prairie, 1929

The image below is a photograph of a portion of the first land plat given to George Peacock after he registered his land with the U.S. government in 1843. This plat is probably from the period of 1870-1885. Due to its deteriorating condition, this land plat has been photo-digitized, and the digital copy has been used in the maps on the following pages.

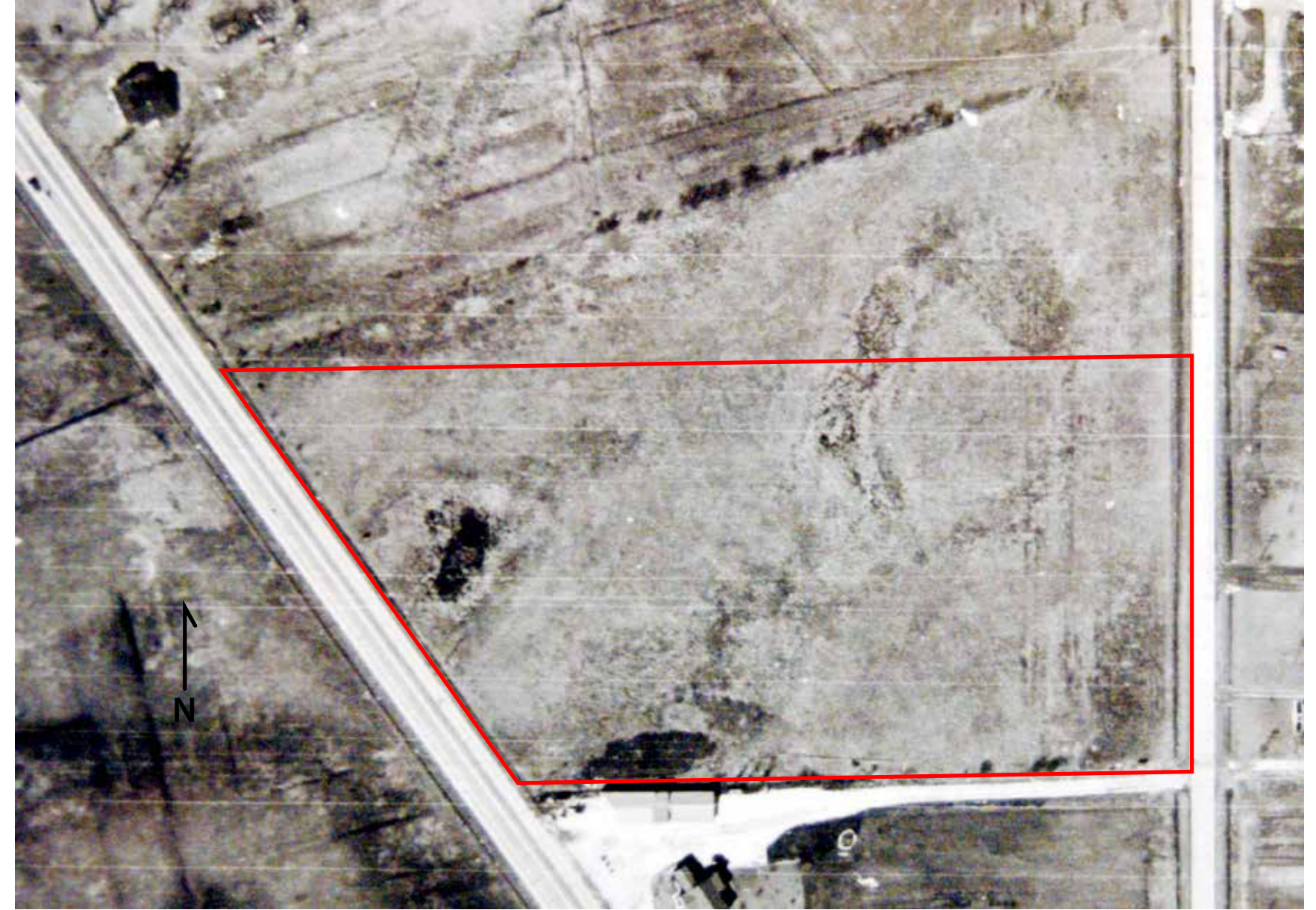
## 1<sup>st</sup> Land Plat of NW Cook County, Illinois



TEXT FIGURE 1 - The Peacock prairie as seen by Dr. Ruth Paintin in 1929. The stippled areas are wetlands. The numbers refer to the quadrats that she sampled. (The sketch map above was photocopied [and rotated 90° clockwise] from: **Paintin, R. D.** 1929. *The morphology and nature of a prairie in Cook County*. *Transactions of the Illinois Academy of Science* 21: 152-175.)

The red dotted line is the boundary of the current James Woodworth Prairie Preserve. The south edge of the current preserve up to the diagonal row of trees (almost at a 90° angle to Milwaukee Avenue) just to the north of the current preserve is the piece of land (about 10 acres) that was "... saved initially from being plowed because of the presence of several poorly drained and occasionally wet areas and the greater availability of drier acreage suitable for farming elsewhere on the estate." (**Visitor pamphlet - James Woodworth Prairie Preserve, The University of Illinois at Chicago**)

This conjecture is made because the current preserve is often too wet to adequately support tractors and/or trucks that are used in farm work. This wet condition is further supported by: **Betz, R. F. and M. H. Cole.** 1969. *The Peacock Prairie - a study of a virgin Illinois mesic black soil prairie forty years after initial study*. *Transactions of the Illinois Academy of Science* 62: 44-53, where they write, "Many of the species of low prairie, ... , are less common today than in 1927, undoubtedly due to a lowering of the water table brought about by changes in drainage. Mr. Long (George Peacock's grandson and heir) stated that in former days (1910) *the prairie was much wetter than it is today.* (1969) [emphasis added] Drain tiles had been installed on the property in the 1910s.



## Aerial Photograph of Peacock Prairie and Surrounding Areas March 28, 1949

Above you see land that was a small part of the 125 acres that George Peacock initially registered with the government in 1843. This image was captured by a high-flying aerial reconnaissance plane on March 28, 1949. The land enclosed in the red line is the current James Woodworth Prairie Preserve.

In 1949, south of the preserve in the triangle of land made by Milwaukee Avenue (the big angled street) and Greenwood Avenue (the

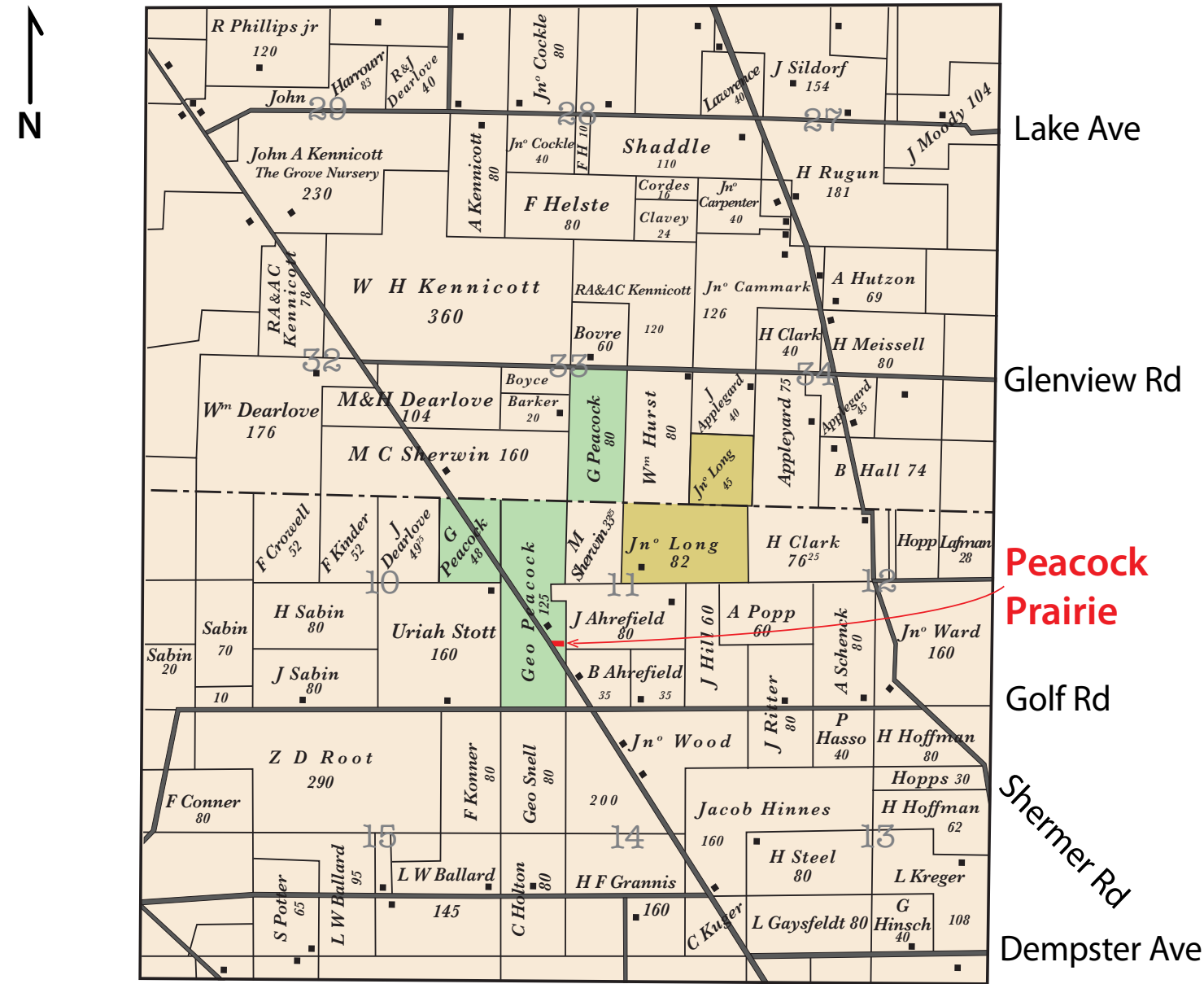
straight north and south street) there were utility farm sheds, barns, garages, and fields used for truck farming. Currently the south margin of the prairie has been built up, that is the property to the south is 1-2.5' higher than the prairie. This probably was done before 1949 to accommodate the buildings and commercial activity south of the prairie visible in this image. To the west, north, and east of the preserve were cultivated fields, with some utility buildings present. The

diagonal line of trees marking the full extent of the original Peacock Prairie is clearly visible from this aerial photograph.

Also clearly visible are the outlines of the Milwaukee swale and the central swale. While the photograph gives amazing detail of the farm and its undisturbed prairie, the sketch map emphasizes better the relatively large amount of wet, mesic prairie there was in the original 10 acres that were never plowed.



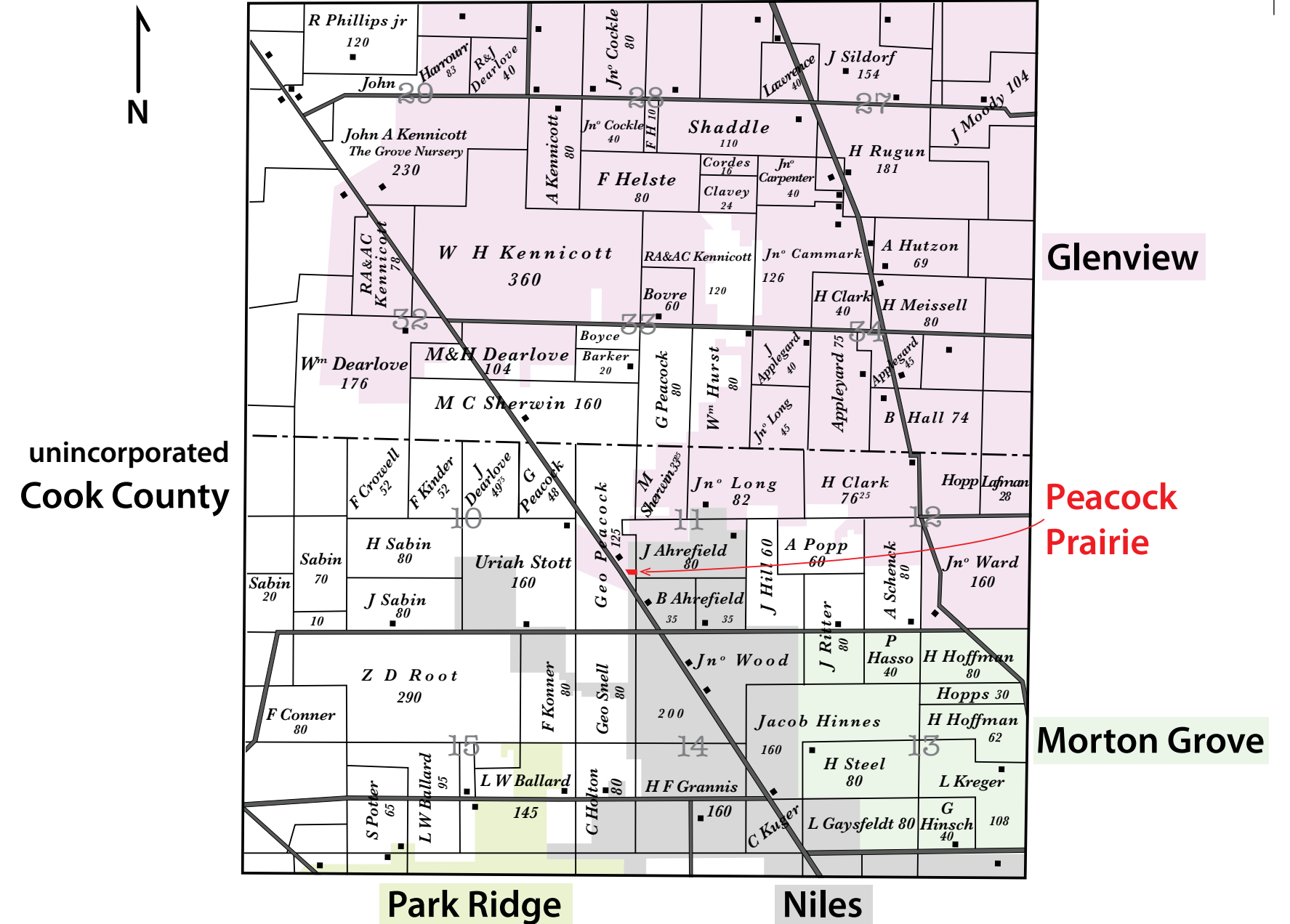
# 1<sup>st</sup> Land Plat of NW Cook County, Illinois - Digitized



Above is a digitized version of the land plat of George Peacock's, John Long's, and others' land holdings sometime after the Civil War. The longest piece of farmland in the middle of Peacock's holdings (in green) was the parcel that contained the 10 acres that in time would become the Peacock Prairie (just to the south of the dot indicating the farmhouse).

Also shown is the John Long farm. The Peacock and Long families were neighbors for a long time and marriage eventually joined the families. As the land shown changed ownership from the Peacocks, to the Longs, then back to the Peacocks, both families knew that what became the Peacock Prairie was a special piece of land on their farm, and they deliberately did not farm that piece of land.

# 1<sup>st</sup> Land Plat of NW Cook County, Illinois - Suburbs Overlay



As the Chicagoland area grew in size, a ring of suburbs grew up around Chicago. Glenview, Morton Grove, Niles, and Park Ridge are part of the inner ring suburbs, many of which touch the city of Chicago boundaries. The map above shows the boundaries of the four closest suburbs to the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve as of 2011.

As many people view the 'modern' map laid over the earliest land plat of the same area, above, they often check to see if they recognize any of the land-holders' names. The one name that is most recognized by Chicago northwest suburbanites is Kennicott. John A. Kennicott was a veterinarian, and more importantly a medical doctor, who came to what would become Glenview from the South, near New Orleans. He planted a fruit tree nursery, The Grove, and built a nice house for his family. The house and the lands around it are today called The Grove, and the site is a registered U.S. landmark.

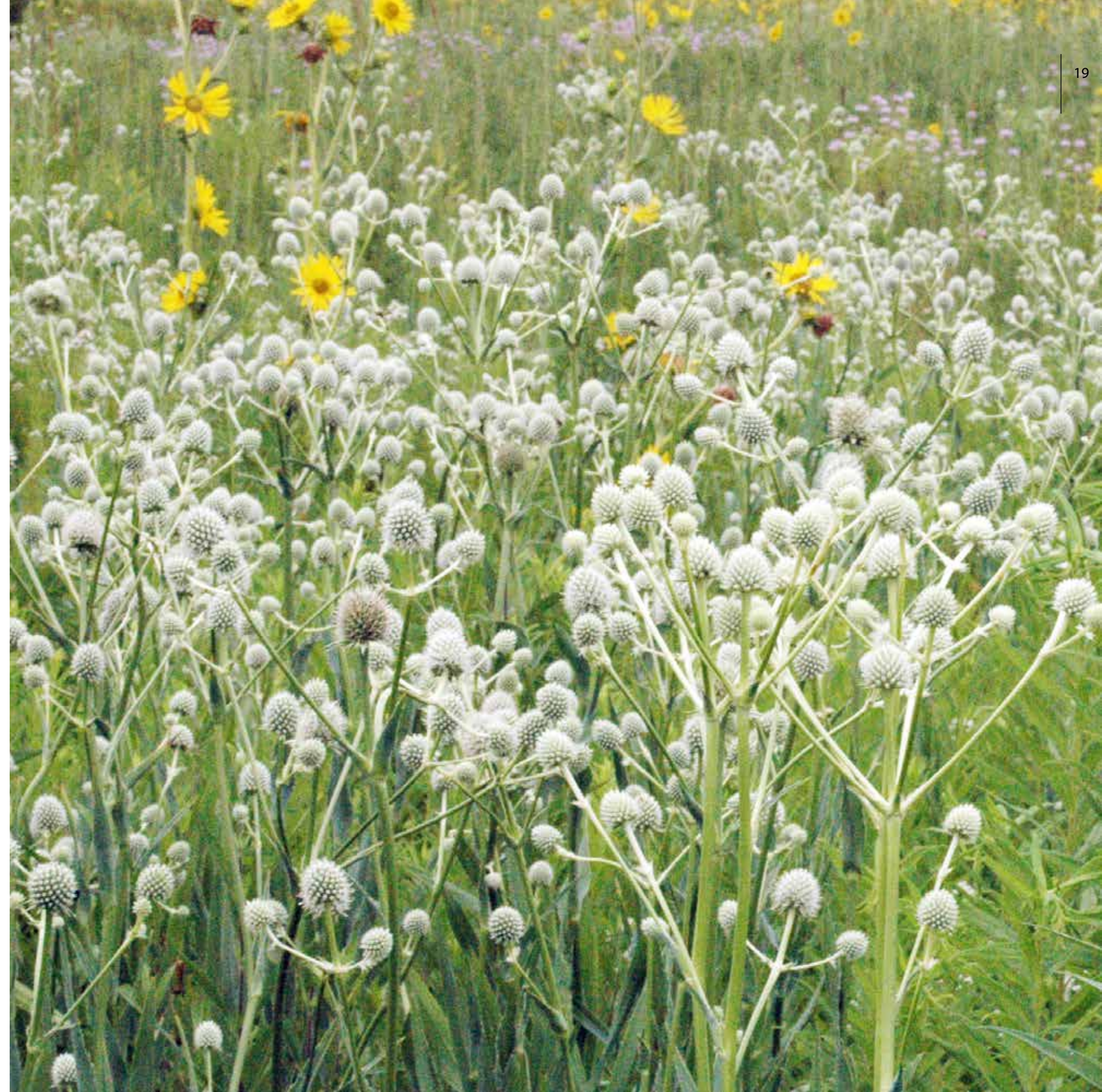


Above is a 1998 satellite view of the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve in the spring before blooming starts.



***Eryngium yuccifolium*** RATTLESNAKE MASTER is the wildflower (forb) that was selected for the logo, above, of the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve. The presence of this species in a prairie patch indicates a rich soil, hence that patch of prairie is a prime, pristine, piece of prairie.

To the immediate right is a flower head of this species, image captured from above. To the far right is a typical stand of this species, if sufficient moisture has fallen, at the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve.



A wide-angle lens view of the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve taken from the northeast corner of the Interpretation Center roof, capturing a view that encompasses a little less than two-thirds of the prairie in early September.





Above, the signature view of the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve. Locals see this image and the most common reaction is: "Oh! I know where that's at!"

To the left, a view of the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve from the northwest corner of the preserve, at the point next to the diagonal street, Milwaukee Avenue. In this view you see a lot of the front view of the prairie preserve not visible in the preceding wide-angle lens view. The contours of the prairie are illustrated by the unevenness of the top of the fence. The Milwaukee swale is visible as a slightly darker color green as you look towards the building.



*Cypripedium candidum* WHITE LADY'S SLIPPER

### The JAMES WOODWORTH PRAIRIE PRESERVE prior construction on site



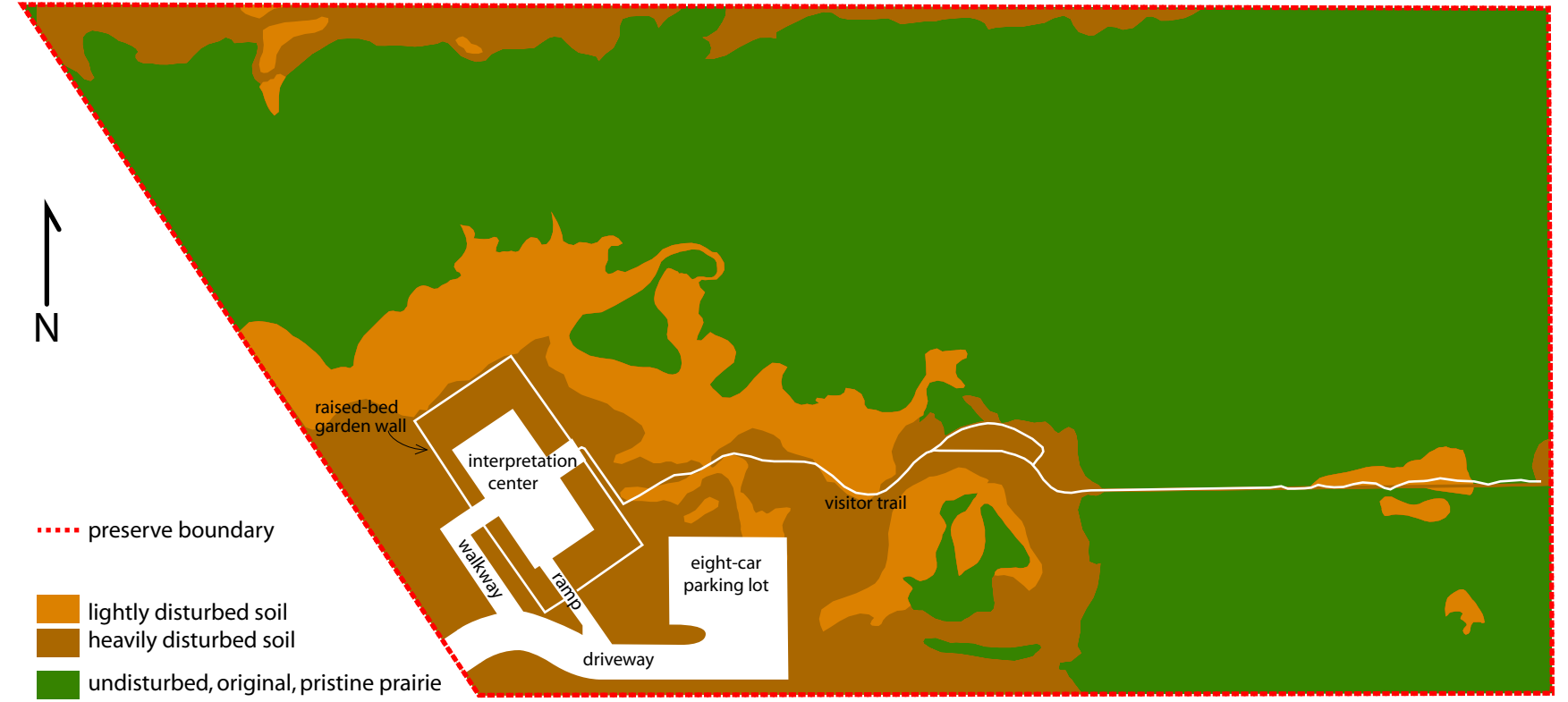
*Lilium philadelphicum andinum* PRAIRIE LILY

George Peacock was one of the original farmers in what was to become the northwest suburbs of Chicago. It is believed that, in the mid-1830s, he legally 'squatted' on the land he was farming after the Black Hawk War cleared northern Illinois of native Americans. About a decade after the war ended, the U.S. government opened the land for legal registration of land claims. Those who were living on a piece of property, had built a shelter to live in, and were actually farming fields for more than one year ('squatters') had the strongest claim to legal title, if ownership was disputed. There are no records that George Peacock's claim was disputed. He was given title to 125.3 acres in 1843 when northern Illinois was first opened to settlement and registration by the U.S. government.

The 5.3 acres of land, mapped above, were near the southern section of his original land holdings. The last ten acres of Peacock's original holdings were sold to a private developer in 1953. The northern part of this last ten acres was developed as single-family housing in 1957. At about the same time, the developer allowed a go-cart track to be built on the southwest corner of the southern five acres. When that became unprofitable, a miniature golf course was built over the go-cart track in the 1960s. When the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) officially received title, by purchase, in 1968, they removed the structures on the southwest corner. This left a section of lightly to heavily disturbed soil.

This map adapted from data collected by Steve Apfelbaum, 1972, and correlated with data from a 1968 aerial photograph.

### The JAMES WOODWORTH PRAIRIE PRESERVE current construction on site

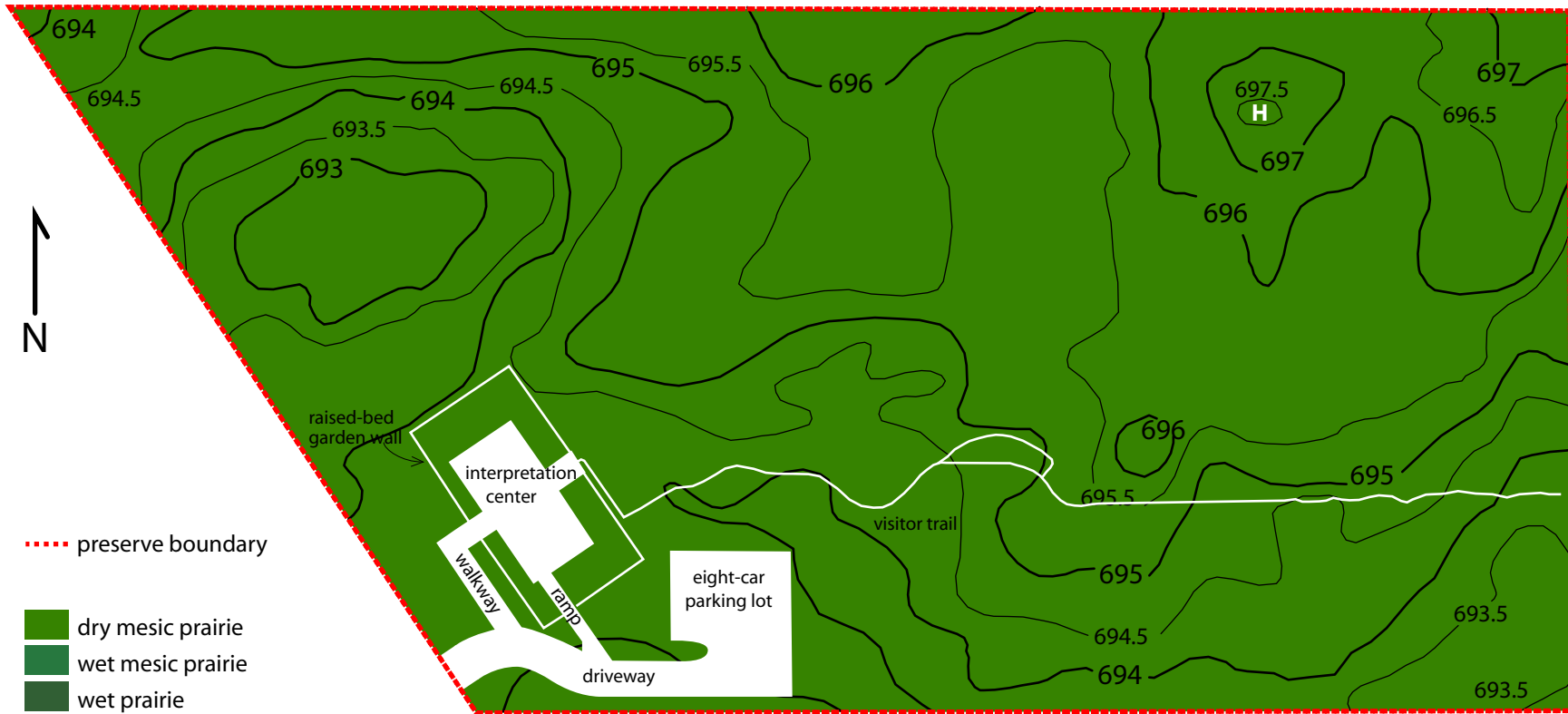


*Gentiana puberulenta* PRAIRIE GENTIAN

UIC then built an interpretation center with a small parking lot, walkways, and a handicapped-accessible ramp way, all on land already disturbed. The visitor trail runs along the northern edge of the disturbed soil, and then follows a slightly sunken pathway that developed over sewer and water pipes that were put in place to service the various buildings on the southwest corner. The \$200,000.00 needed to build this small complex were donated by the family of John S. Leslie, the great-grandson of James Woodworth, an early mayor of Chicago and representative to the U.S. Congress from Illinois. Formally opened in 1972, the Peacock Prairie was renamed the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve to honor the Leslie family's contribution. Prairie restoration, which had already informally begun in the mid-1960s with some major field clean-up efforts, continued after completion of the new construction. The disturbed soils were left to grow back into prairie. Seeds were collected from the pristine areas of the prairie to use in this effort.

This map adapted from data collected by Steve Apfelbaum, 1972, and correlated with data from a mid-1990s satellite photograph.

### The JAMES WOODWORTH PRAIRIE PRESERVE topography map



*Dodecatheon meadia* SHOOTING STAR

The James Woodworth Prairie Preserve is close to flat. The primary tilt is with the high end in the northeast and the low in the southwest. But the land is not completely flat; it undulates gently, with the highest point (H) 50 yards from the east edge and the two largest depressions (swales) in the middle and west edge of the north half. The elevation difference between the high spot and the low spot is about 5 feet. Both swales are ephemeral wetlands (they dry out each year), but when they are full the central swale holds 10" and the Milwaukee Avenue swale 16" of water at their deepest spots.

This map adapted from data collected by Steve Apfelbaum, 1972.



The Milwaukee Avenue swale at near maximum depth following a prescribed burn that removed almost all debris. Image acquired using a wide-angle lens from the roof of the Interpretation Center.

### The JAMES WOODWORTH PRAIRIE PRESERVE hydrology map



*Lespedeza capitata* PRAIRIE BUSHCLOVER

When it rains heavily, or when the ground is saturated and it rains lightly, water runs off the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve, filling the deepest swales (dark green) to overflowing, then filling the more shallow swales (medium green), and then flowing off the prairie preserve. This flow pattern results in the MILWAUKEE AVENUE SWALE receiving a large amount of runoff, and holding a large amount of runoff due to its depth. In dry years there may be no water present during many parts of the growing season (April through September). Heavy rains have filled the swale in August, but it has always been dry in July.

The current wetlands are mostly unaltered from Paintin's map of 1925-26. The major change is in the southwest corner of the prairie, where Paintin shows a large, deep swale (still visible in the the 1949 aerial photograph) that is almost as large as the MILWAUKEE AVENUE SWALE. Part of this now-vanished wetland remains as RAINPOST SWALE and another as part of SOUTH FENCE SWALE, but the majority of this now-vanished wetland was altered during the go-cart and miniature golf phase.

A minor change is that the wetland in the northeast corner of the current prairie now connects with the arm of the CENTRAL SWALE that extends toward it.

No wonder it is thought that because of its wetness, George Peacock and his descendants avoided plowing this section of their farm.

This map adapted from data collected by Steve Apfelbaum and visually displayed in a painting done by Suzan Apfelbaum, 1972, by further data collected by Wyatt Gaswick and Dennis Nyberg, 2007.



An aerial view of the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve in the lower left of the image, along with a view of the downtown Chicago skyline in the upper right, approximately 17 miles away. The east half of the prairie was routinely burned about four weeks prior to the capture of this image. The east half is a deeper green from new spring growth. The west half appears a lighter tan-green color due to leftover debris from the previous growing season mixed in with the new spring growth. Image taken by Joe Occhiuzzo.  
 © Joe Occhiuzzo Photography

## IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

When I began this project, all I knew about prairie was what I had picked up in school, which was not much. I grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, not far from the Bluegrass region. The Bluegrass is one of the first two prairies that European settlers encountered as they moved into the Midwest. The other was the Darby Plains grasslands in Ohio. Both were large pieces of grassland, but both were very small compared to the Grand Prairie of northern Illinois. And the Grand Prairie was very small compared to the prairies of the Great Plains.

As a child in school, I learned of the prairie and I remember that we had taken a trip or two to see prairie. But all I remember of these trips was standing on the edge of a plain, and looking out over flowers in bloom; then wondering where we were going to eat lunch. As a child, and then as a teenager, I was not much interested in botany.

So when I began this photography project, I viewed it as a good way to improve my photo skills, *and* to learn a bit more about prairie. After seven years of growing seasons, I have learned much more than I expected. Along the way several books about prairie were very useful to me in my self-education:

Candace Savage's *Prairie: A Natural History (2004)* deals with every aspect of prairie, in detail. Yet, it is easy to read. It could be used for a college introductory course.

James R. Page is a photographer whose book: *Wild Prairie: A Photographer's Personal Journey (2005)*, details a two year odyssey to capture images of what remains of the North American prairie. He focused primarily on sweeping vistas.

Michael Forsberg is another photographer whose book: *Great Plains: America's Lingering Wild (2010)*, also captures images of what remains of the North American prairie. His images emphasize wildlife.

William C. Burger is a writer whose *Flowers: How They Changed the World (2006)*, is the best book on flowers in general (all the angiosperms). I often use information from his book in my personal presentations.

M.H. Dunlop is a writer whose *Sixty Miles From Contentment: Traveling The Nineteenth-Century American Interior (1995)* is a unique book that looks at travelers and travel writers

who explored the Old Northwest Territory, including its expansive prairies, in the period from 1820 to 1890. Her book is an analysis of some 300 different travelers who wrote about their journeys, allowing us to see how American culture of that period reacted to the vast interior of the United States. I often use information from her book in my personal presentations.

John Madson is another writer whose book, *Where The Sky Began: Land of the Tallgrass Prairie (1982)*, is credited with energizing the prairie preservation and restoration movement in the United States.

The most entertaining book I've read was *Great Plains* by Ian Frazier. His story is about everything on the great plains, and prairie runs through the entire story. He narrates, summer after summer, an eclectic journey by car through the great plains and its history.

Bernice Popelka wrote a book that deals with the specifics of the effort from 1965 to 1968 to preserve the Peacock Prairie. Her book is titled *Saving the Peacock Prairie: The Grassroots Campaign to Protect a Wild Urban Prairie - The Story of Chicago's James Woodworth Prairie Preserve*. She details the struggle her group went through to preserve a piece of pristine prairie, and how it almost didn't happen. To purchase, go to <http://peacockprairie.blogspot.com/p/book.html>

Other books by authors associated with the James Woodworth Prairie Preserve are: Charlotte Adelman & Bernard Schwartz's *Prairie Directory of North America* and *The Midwestern Native Garden – An Illustrated Guide to Native Alternatives to Nonnative Flowers and Plants*. To purchase one, or both, go to <http://www.amazon.com>

Finally, two books of my four book *Splendor Series* are available for purchase: *Abundant Splendor: Wildflowers of the Tallgrass Splendor* dealing with the easy to find wildflowers, and *Elusive Splendor: Wildflowers of the Tallgrass Splendor*, dealing with the more difficult to find and/or identify wildflowers. To purchase go to: [black-sweater-art.com](http://black-sweater-art.com), then pull down PRAIRIE IMAGES. Hopefully *Graceful Splendor: Grasses of the Tallgrass Prairie*, dealing with the sedges, rushes, and true grasses of the tallgrass prairie, and *Eccentric Splendor: Images of the Tallgrass*

*Prairie*, featuring beautiful images dealing with line, color, and pattern that did not fit into the logical organization of the first three books, will be ready for publication in the fall of 2014.

When I began actually capturing wildflower images 'in the field' at the Peacock Prairie, I simply wandered around the edges looking for new colors. Every time I spotted a new color, I knew I had a new species to photograph. That worked fine for half the growing season. Then the colors started to repeat, and I started going up to all the colors each week to check if I had already captured images of them. With about 160 species on the official list for this piece of original prairie, I simply could not have remembered all of them with constantly checking, first, reference photo images on the internet, and then, after awhile, checking back to my own photo images. Also, it ended up that I sorted and stored about 70,000 photo images over eight growing seasons. Without the invention of personal computers, this entire project would have taken much longer and resulted in a much lower quality product, if there were any results at all.

Finally what I really learned was how to see these beautiful wildflowers, from a distance, from closer in, and from really close up. I also became very aware of changes in shape and structure as the wildflowers sprouted up, grew to maturity, and then died back.

I know more about prairie now than I did when I started this project. Not surprisingly, each time I go back to capture more images, I find that I learn even more about the splendor of a prairie.



*Helianthus grosseserratus*

SAWTOOTH SUNFLOWER

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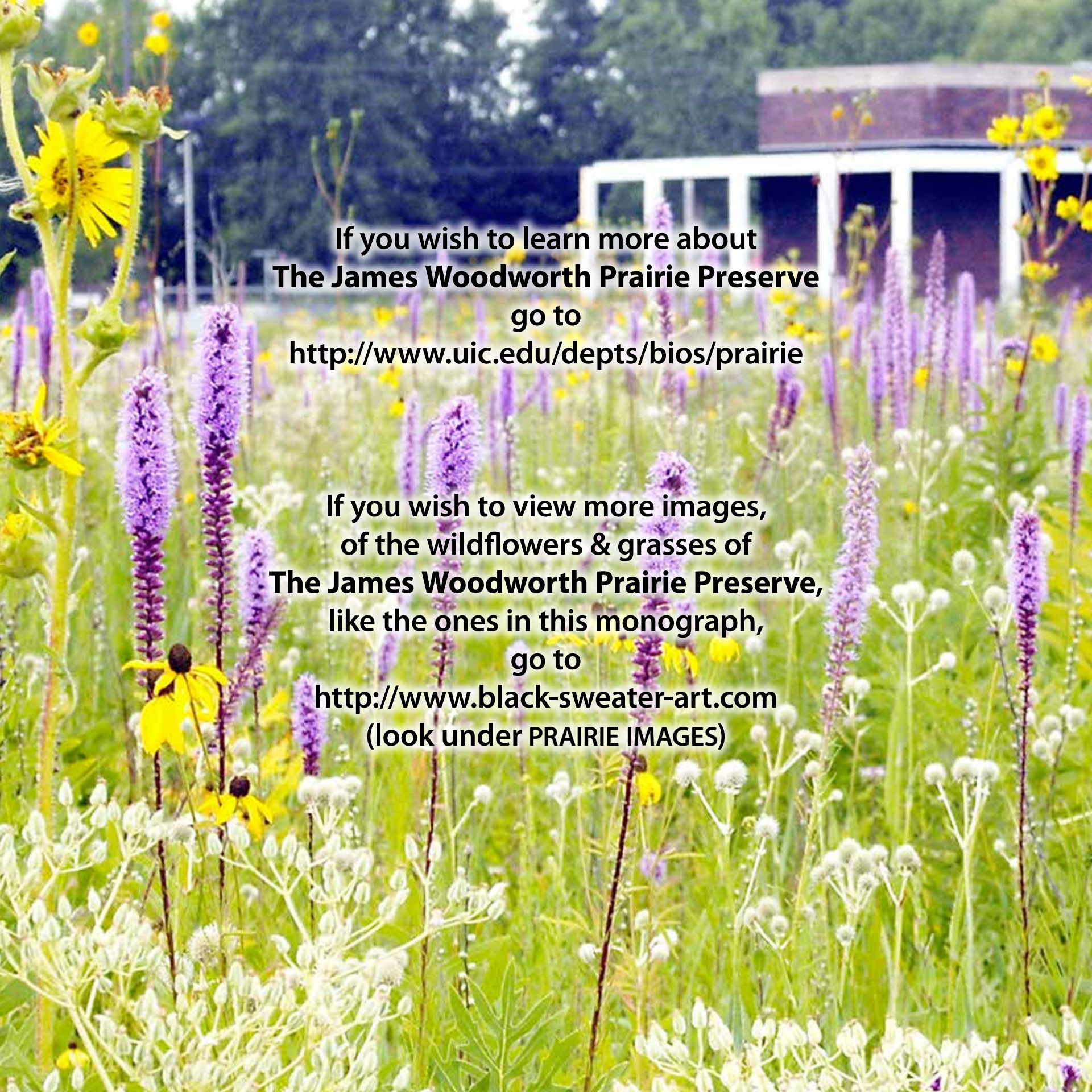
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**If you wish to learn more about  
The James Woodworth Prairie Preserve  
go to  
<http://www.uic.edu/depts/bios/prairie>**

**If you wish to view more images,  
of the wildflowers & grasses of  
The James Woodworth Prairie Preserve,  
like the ones in this monograph,  
go to  
<http://www.black-sweater-art.com>  
(look under PRAIRIE IMAGES)**