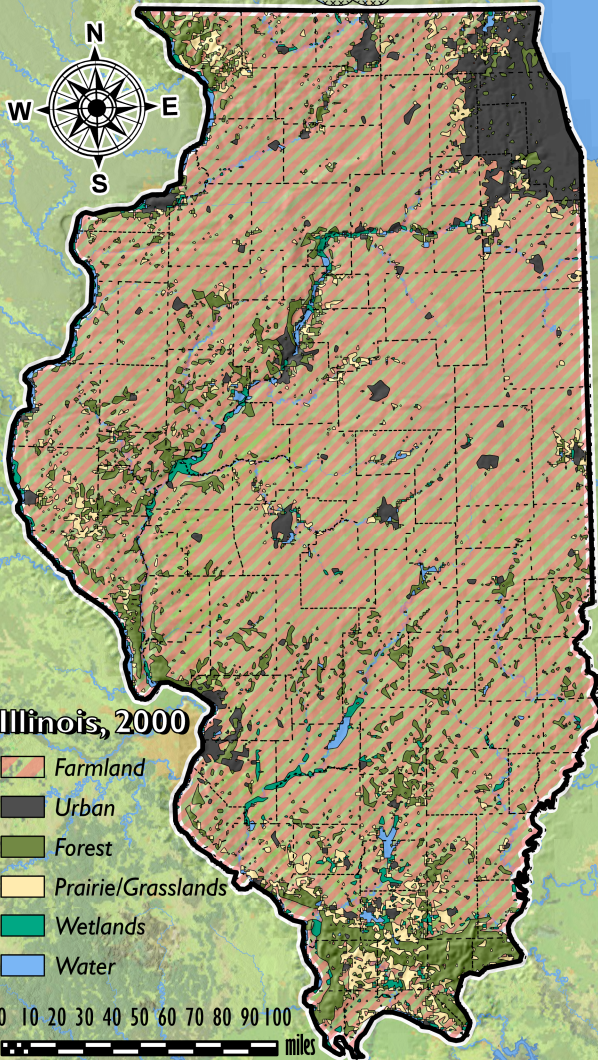


# What Happened?



Illinois, "the Prairie State", was once known for its endless fields of tallgrass prairies. Now, it seems all you can see is endless cornfields. So what happened to the prairie?

We are the breadbasket of the country. To make way for all this farming, **99.9%** of native Illinois tallgrass prairie was cleared. That is complete ecological destruction! So, what can we do? >>>

## Included Seeds

All seeds are native to Illinois or this broader region of the Midwest  
Seeds are from a mix from Paper Street Seed Company

- Coreopsis lanceolata (Lance-Leaved Coreopsis)
- Coreopsis tinctoria (Plains Coreopsis)
- Cosmos sulphureus (Sulphus Cosmos)
- Echinacea purpurea (Purple Coneflower)
- Gaillardia pulchella (Indian Blanket)
- Gaura lindheimeri (Gaura)
- Gypsophila elegans (Annual Baby's Breath)
- Lavatera trimestris (Tree Mallow)
- Linum grandiflorum rubrum (Scarlet Flax)
- Lupinus perennis (Perennial Lupine)
- Mirabilis jalapa (Four O'Clocks)
- Monarda citriodora (Lemon Mint)
- Salvia coccinea (Scarlet Sage)
- Symphyotrichum novae-angliae (New England Aster)
- Rudbeckia amplexicaulis (Clasping Cornflower)
- Rudbeckia hirta (Black-Eyed Susan)

## Sources and Data Attributions

### Maps Information:

- 1:4,419,252 (1 in ≈ 70 miles)
- NAD 1983
- Illinois State Plane West FIPS 1202 (US Feet)
- Counties/State Boundary from USGS
- Land cover data from INHS, Anderson (1970)
- 30m DEM from ILHMP
- Hydro data from NOAA

### Sources:

- Illinois Department of Natural Resources "Prairies"
- University of Illinois, Illinois Natural History Survey "Where to see prairies"
- Fermilab Ecology "Tallgrass Prairie"
- Forest Preserve District Will County "Pockets of the past"
- Grassland Heritage Foundation "Threats to the Prairie"
- Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum of the Chicago Academy of Sciences "The Ghosts of Prairies Past: Uncovering Yesterday's Truths with Museum Collections"
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- Tina Shaw "Restoring the prairies for wildlife and people"

February 2026  
for SIUE senior capstone project

# Save the Prairie!



- Learn About the Prairies
- Plant Native Species
- Spread Awareness

# Why Does It Matter?

Just 200 years ago, Illinois was about 60% prairie. Today, less than 0.1% of that remains.

What was once one of America's vastest and healthiest ecosystems is now scattered, broken, and at risk of disappearing completely.

This wasn't empty land- it was a complex, diverse, and vibrant ecosystem which hosted hundreds of species of native plants, pollinators, birds, and insects- many found nowhere else.

Due to glaciation, the northern two thirds of Illinois is extremely flat, and even more fertile. Our soil is extremely loose and well drained, and was once held in place by the tallgrass roots, sometimes reaching up to 20 feet deep in the ground.

The loss of prairies affects all of us. Without them, our biodiversity suffers, water systems weaken, and soil health declines.

## Without these species, we suffer too.

What is left over are not just open fields. These prairie restoration areas are the living history of Illinois, and they are irreplaceable.

But in spite of all this doom and gloom, there are active efforts to save the prairie- and YOU can be a part of it!



# What Can I Do?

## Plant Native Species!

- Conservation starts small. Included with this pamphlet is a small pack of perennial wildflower seeds. If you have the land, growing a native garden will bring lots of beautiful life to your yard. If not, you can participate in guerrilla gardening by spreading seeds in vacant lots and bring beauty to your community!

## Support Conservation!

- There are many state and local conservation groups who would love your help. Volunteer, donate, or even just visit- it makes a difference. Included is a list of local prairies you can visit!

## Vote, Vote, Vote!

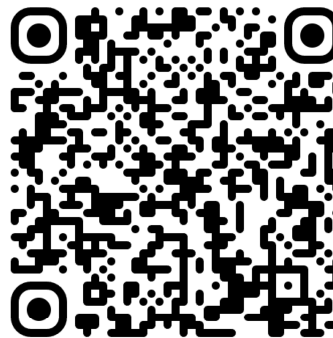
- Your voice matters. Talk to your local representatives and be heard! Vote for environmental policies that support conservation, and you can rest assured you (and your tax dollars) have done your part.

Illinois Native Wildflowers

See back for list of species

Plant after last freeze or in the fall for blooms in the spring

For more instructions scan QR (Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources)



# See the Prairie!

Always confirm hours and public access before visiting. Obey posted guidelines, respect private property, stay on designated trails, and Leave No Trace. These areas are protected for a reason, and your responsibility helps preserve them.

## Southern Illinois

- Chauncey Marsh
  - Denby Prairie
  - DeSoto Prairie
  - Fults Hill Prairie
  - Poag Sand Prairie
  - Prairie Ridge Natural Area
- Lawrence County
  - Macoupin County
  - Jackson County
  - Monroe County
  - Madison County
  - Jasper County

## Central Illinois

- Anderson Prairie
  - Manito Prairie
  - Prospect Cemetery Prairie
  - Revis Hill Prairie
  - Robinson Park Hill Prairies
  - Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak
  - Wells Cemetery Prairie
- Christian County
  - Tazewell County
  - Ford County
  - Mason County
  - Peoria County
  - Mason County
  - Champaign County

## Northern Illinois

- Ayers Sand Prairie
  - Belmont Prairie
  - Bluff Spring Fen
  - Foley Sand Prairie
  - Freeport Prairie
  - Illinois Beach State Park
  - Lake-In-The-Hills Fen
  - Wolf Road Prairie
- Carroll County
  - DuPage County
  - Cook County
  - Lee County
  - Stephenson County
  - Lake County
  - McHenry County
  - Cook County

Don't see one near you? Check out the IDNR's website- there's many more!



Forest Preserve District of Will County