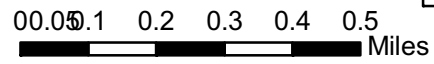
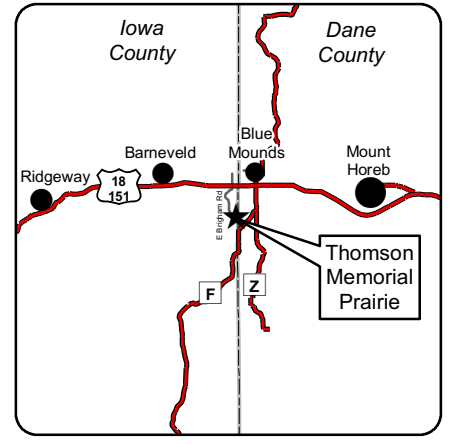


-  Preserve boundary
-  Lake
-  River / Stream
-  Highway
-  Local Road
-  Parking
-  County boundary

Directions from the town of Mt. Horeb: Take US Hwy 18/151 west. Proceed to the intersection with Cnty Hwy F on the southwestern edge of Blue Mounds. Turn south on Cnty F and continue for just over one mile. At the intersection with Cnty Hwy Z, turn right - this will keep you on Cnty F. The preserve will be on your right in about one-half mile. Park in the small fenced parking lot or along the side of the road.



Thomson Memorial Prairie



Thomson Memorial Prairie

Why You Should Visit

This is a great place to see prairie wildflowers, butterflies and grassland birds. This preserve features remnant dry prairie scattered among prairie plantings and grasslands in a mostly agricultural landscape.

Hours and Conditions

Open year-round, dawn to dusk (except during the winter when plowed snow prevents off-road parking). There are no trails here, and poison ivy is abundant - so be careful!

Note that hunting for white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and pheasant is allowed at Thomson Memorial Prairie during the regular posted seasons, with no prior permission from the Conservancy required. Dogs are allowed off-leash for pheasant hunting during pheasant season. Dogs must be on-leash the rest of the year, especially during the breeding bird season.

Also note that as of 2009 there is still some agricultural land at this site. Hikers will find crop fields and large areas mowed for weed control. Crop fields will be planted to grasslands in years to come.

What to See: Plants

Rare plants, such as wild turnip and green milkweed, thrive among a profusion of other prairie grasses and wildflowers. Many prairie plants grace this undulating landscape, including the following: big bluestem, birdfoot violet, Pasque flower, porcupine grass, and yellow-star grass.

What to See: Birds

Many grassland bird species, including dickcissels and eastern meadowlarks, are common here. Bell's vireos, bobolinks and upland sandpipers are also found here.

What to See: Butterflies

The following species have been seen here: Aphrodite fritillary, monarchs, tiger swallowtails, and various species of skippers and sulphurs.

Why the Conservancy Selected this Site

Thomson is a remnant of the past. Prior to settlement, ridges and slopes in this part of the state were covered with dry prairie vegetation. Today, this is one of the few remaining areas in the state where there are numerous remnant prairies scattered across the landscape. In addition, the prairie is home to a diverse natural community - more than 68 species of plants grow here, and 34 species of birds nest or feed here.

What the Conservancy Has Done/Is Doing

Little remains of Wisconsin's once extensive native prairies. Those that have managed to survive, like the ones found throughout Thomson Memorial Prairie, are small, isolated and fragmented. To recreate a larger grassland ecosystem, these prairie remnants must be carefully managed and expanded.

With the help of volunteers, we are working to restore the degraded prairie and agricultural land surrounding the preserve through a combination of planting, prescribed burning and exotic species control.

How This Site Was Named

The Conservancy named the area Thomson Memorial Prairie in recognition of John and Olive Thomson, longtime friends and stewards of the prairie. In honor of their deceased son Douglas, the Thomsons established a fund for land acquisition at the prairie.