

Welcome to the Wet Prairie Trail located in Unit K of the Efroymsen Restoration at Kankakee Sands, owned and managed by the Indiana Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. The 7,800 acres of the Efroymsen Restoration contribute to the conservation of Kankakee Sands, a large prairie-savanna complex in Northwest Indiana and Northeast Illinois that encompasses more than 30,000 acres of land protected by the Conservancy and its conservation partners.

Hiking the Wet Prairie Trail

The **Wet Prairie Trail** is an easy 0.6 mile loop trail featuring water-loving sedges, wildflowers, amphibians, birds and insects. Depending on the time of year, you may find the trail dry, a little wet or completely covered in water.

It is the rich and diverse wetland vegetation of the historic Grand Kankakee Marsh that we have reintroduced via seed in the moister sections of the Efroymsen Restoration. Ever since we planted the Unit K restoration in 1999, an increasing number of plants, animals, insects and birds, are returning to the healing landscape.

The **Wet Prairie Trail** in Unit K begins across the driveway from the parking lot at the Kankakee Sands Office.

At the trailhead, please utilize the Boot Brush Station to clean potentially non-native invasive species seeds off the soles of your shoes. By doing so you help prevent the spread of non-native species that can damage the diverse plant communities found here. For example, a recent infestation of Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), brought in on the soles of an

unsuspecting hiker, had to be controlled to prevent it from overtaking the area.

From the Boot Brush Station, the trail meanders to the north and west toward the large Efroymsen Memorial Rock. In the wet spring you will find a small, shallow pond just a few feet west of the Memorial Rock. Though the pond is nearly dry in the summer months, it is always a good place to look for frogs, toads and animal tracks.

From the Memorial Rock, look northwest toward the large sand dune in Unit K. This dune is associated with a historic sand ridge, known as “Bogus Island,” where counterfeiters and horse thieves once found high ground among the vast marsh that was once Beaver Lake.

Continue along the trail, which turns south towards the red house used for intern lodging, and enjoy the diversity of wetland plant shapes and colors that line the trail.

The trail ends at the driveway across from the little red house. Walk along the driveway to return to the parking area.

Continue along the trail, which turns east towards the tree line. The trail ends back at the Boot Brush Station where you began the hike.

Trail Rules and Safety Tips

Pack out your litter and leave the plants and wildflowers for others to enjoy.

No ATVs, dirt bikes, camping or horseback riding. Pets must be leashed and under control at all times. Please remove all pet wastes.

Be mindful of hunting seasons and notices of prescribed burning when visiting the Kankakee Sands area.

What to look for along the Wet Prairie Trail

The plant and animal species along this trail are abundant and diverse. Some of the commonly seen or heard species are listed below. Let us know if you find something of interest! Leave your comments at the visitor information area under the silo shelter across the parking area from the trailhead.

Birds: American bittern (state endangered), bobolink, dickcissel, grasshopper sparrow, Henslow’s sparrow (state endangered), northern harrier (state endangered), pectoral sandpiper, red-winged blackbird

Reptiles and Amphibians: Chorus frog, Fowler’s toad, leopard frog (species of special concern)

Plants: Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), blue joint grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), fox sedge (*Carex vulpinoidea*), horsetail (*Equisetum hyemale*), blue flag iris (*Iris virginica shrevei*), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*), winged loosestrife (*Lythrum alatum*), hardstem bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*), green bulrush (*Scirpus atrovirens*), prairie cordgrass (*Spartina pectinata*)

Arthropods: Crayfish, ruby meadowhawk dragonfly



The Nature Conservancy is an international, non-profit organization working around the world. Our mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. For more information visit nature.org.

TRAIL GUIDE

Efroymsen Restoration at Kankakee Sands

Wet Prairie (Unit K)

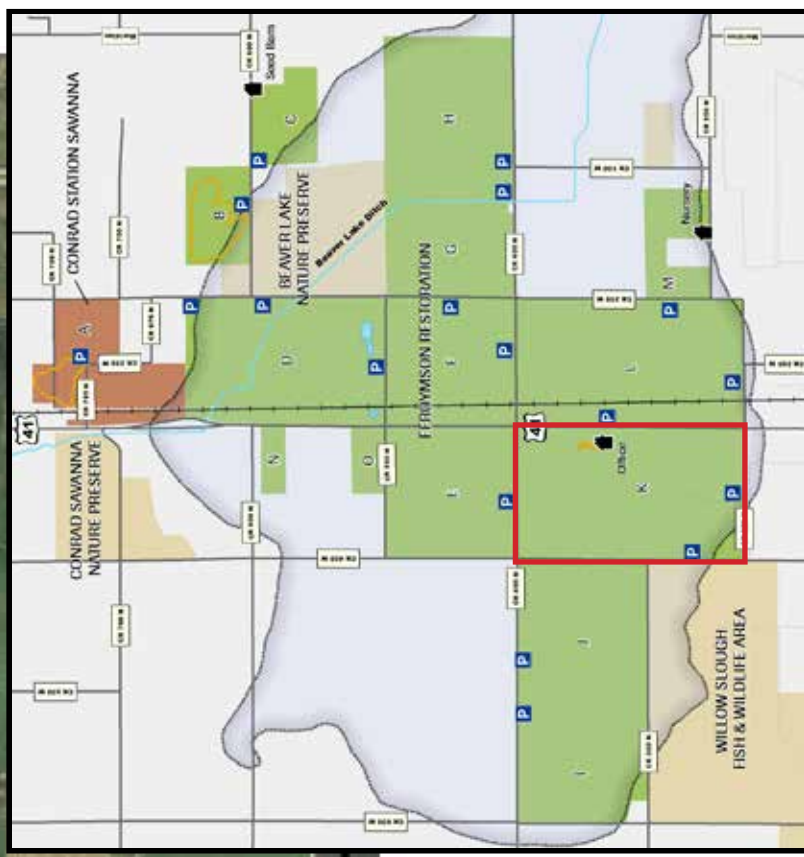
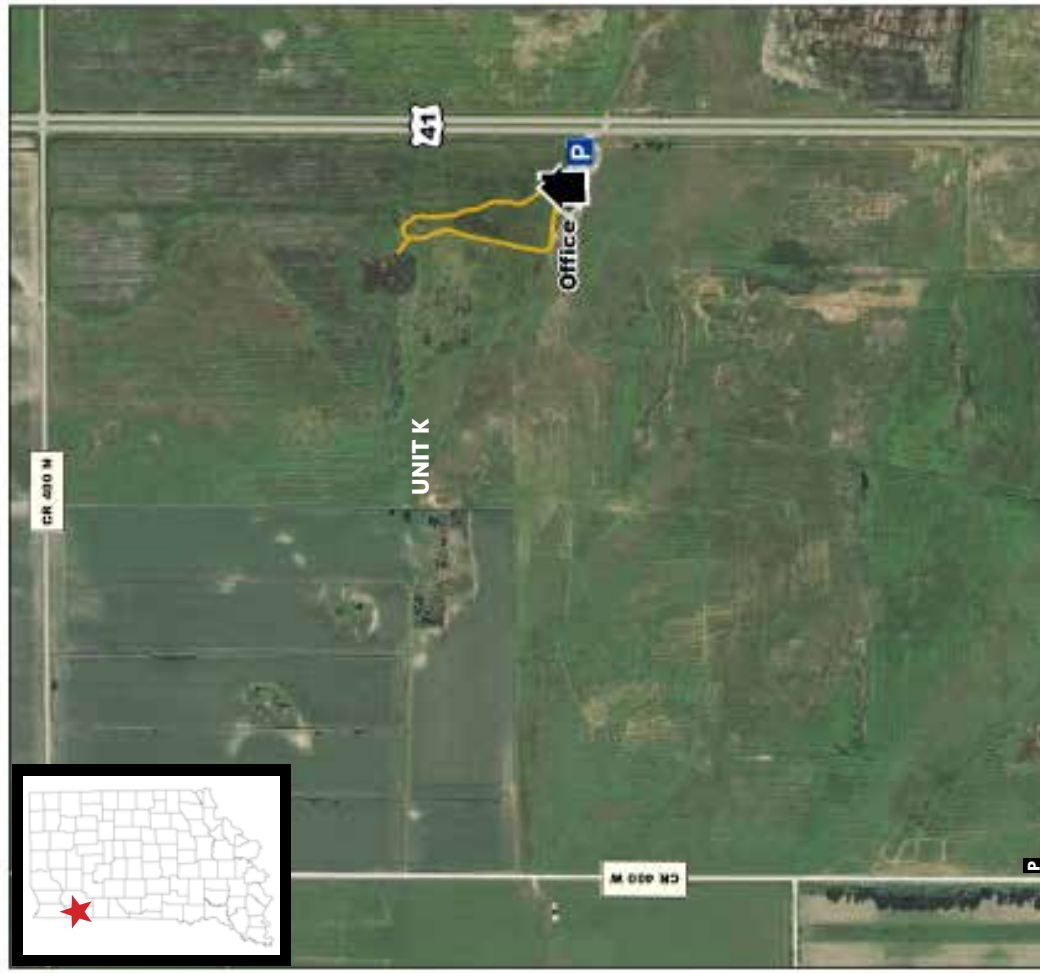




Welcome to Wet Prairie (Unit K)



From top: American bittern, cardinal flower, leopard frog, red-winged blackbird, swamp milkweed



Unit K is located at the southeast end of the Efrogymson Restoration at Kankakee Sands, and is adjacent to Willow Slough Fish and Wildlife Area, owned and managed by Indiana Department of Natural Resources.



The Nature Conservancy

Protecting nature. Preserving life.

Enjoy your visit to Conrad Station Savanna! Be a part of the future of Conrad Station and Kankakee Sands by volunteering and/or making a donation.

Learn more at [nature.org/kankakeesands](https://www.nature.org/kankakeesands). The Nature Conservancy depends on the support of people like you who enjoy Indiana's natural places.