



PRAIRIE DOCK
(*Silphium
terebinthinaceum*)
has rough, scaly



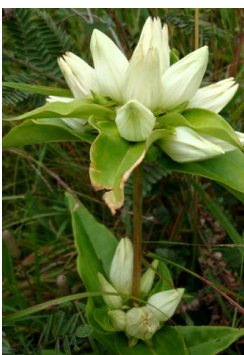
leaves like the other members of the Silphium family. Its yellow flowers usually bloom in late summer, and its roots can grow as deep as 12 feet.



CUP PLANT (*Silphium
perfoliatum*) gets its name because the leaves can hold water, making it a useful plant to thirsty human and animals alike. Its yellow flowers grow up to 8 feet tall and bloom from summer to fall.



CREAM GENTIAN (*Gentiana flavida*) is rare in Illinois yet can be found blooming at Buffalo Trace from late summer to fall. This plant is very sensitive to moisture and extreme sunlight. Luckily, grazing animals dislike the bitter taste of the leaves.



The History of Buffalo Trace

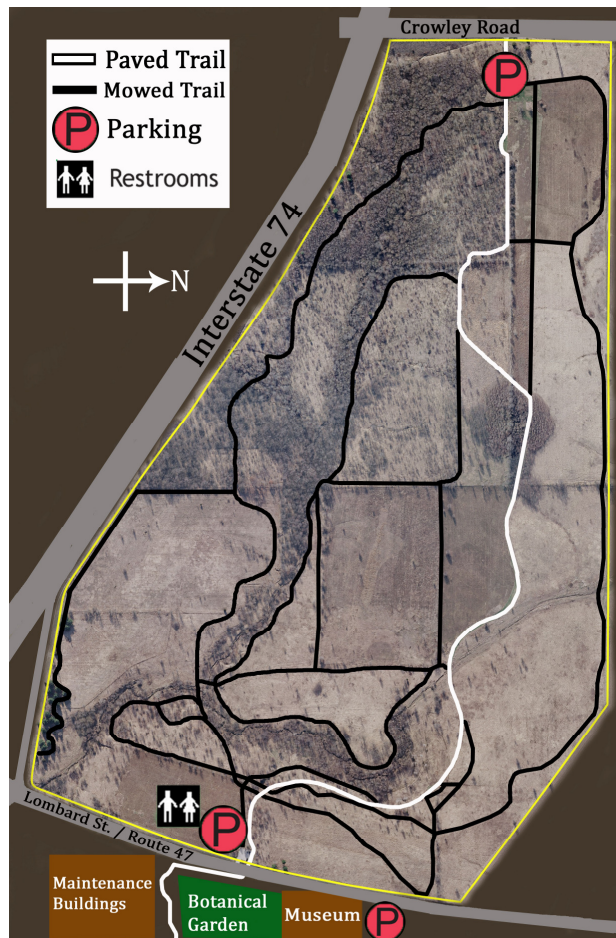
Purchased by the Champaign County Forest Preserve District in 1976, this land was officially named Buffalo Trace after the path that was first created by millions of migrating bison. Native Americans, and later European settlers, also followed the trace as they hunted and traversed the Midwest. Interstate 74 now follows that same path.

Tallgrass prairie is characterized by few trees, extreme seasonal temperatures and drought, and some of the richest soil anywhere in the world. When the first settlers arrived in Champaign County around the year 1820, more than 60% of Illinois, over 22 million acres, was prairie! Currently, less than 0.01% (just over 2,000 acres) of unplowed prairie remains, often along railroad tracks and in pioneer cemeteries.

Historically, prairies thrived on natural disturbances such as wildfires and bison grazing. This reconstructed prairie is actively managed through strategic mowing, seed collecting and dispersal, planting, invasive species removal, and prescribed burns.

In 1995, the paved pathway was installed and some of the older grass trails were left to return to their natural state. The network of trails is presently more than 7 miles long.

Buffalo Trace Trail Map



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Buffalo Trace Prairie Wildflower Guide



Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve

COMPASS PLANT
(*Silphium laciniatum*) has yellow flowers that can grow up to 8 feet tall; they bloom from late



spring to summer. This plant is named for its ability to orient its leaves along a north-south axis to avoid the hot midday sun. The leaves are rough and heavily lobed to help the plant conserve water.



WILD QUININE (*Parthenium integrifolium*), or “feverfew,” has been used for centuries to treat fevers. Its white, flat-topped flowers bloom from late spring to summer and have a texture similar to that of cauliflower.



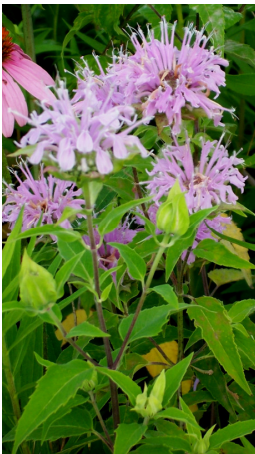
GRAY-HEADED CONEFLOWER (*Ratibida pinnata*) has yellow petals that were once used to make dye. This resilient prairie flower blooms from late spring to fall and can survive in conditions where most others cannot.



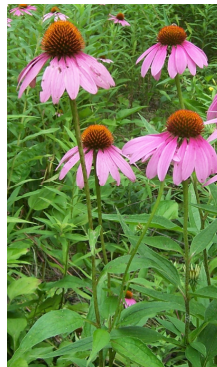
WHITE WILD INDIGO (*Baptisia alba*) blooms from late spring to midsummer and is closely related to the blue-flowered species that was used by settlers to make blue dyes. Both species can survive in areas of heavy grazing, as they are toxic to livestock.



WILD BERGAMOT (*Monarda fistulosa*), also known as “bee balm,” is a member of the mint family. This fragrant, lavender-colored flower blooms from late spring to early fall. It was once used to treat ailments from acne to fevers and is still used in herbal teas.



PURPLE CONEFLOWER (*Echinacea purpurea*) roots were historically used to numb toothaches and sore throats. Parts of this plant are still used today as an herbal remedy to treat colds and boost immunity. Easy to recognize, these flowers bloom from late spring to fall.



RATTLESNAKE MASTER (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) is a member of the carrot family that was once mistakenly thought to be an antidote for snake bites. The gray heads are composed of many tiny, summer-blooming flowers.

BIG BLUESTEM (*Andropogon gerardii*) is the state grass of Illinois. It averages 3 to 6 feet in height but can grow as tall as 9 feet! Its name comes from the color of the young stems. It is also called “turkey’s foot” because of the arrangement of the three, summer-blooming flower heads.



INDIAN GRASS (*Sorghastrum nutans*) can reach heights of 7 feet and commonly grows alongside big bluestem. The flower heads are first reddish-brown, and then fade to grayish-brown. They bloom from midsummer to early fall.



PRAIRIE BLAZING STAR (*Liatris pycnostachya*) blooms from midsummer to early fall. Its purple flowers grow in a dense spike at the top of the plant and can reach 5 feet in height. Other liatris species are commonly used in flower arrangements.



SNEEZEWEED (*Helenium autumnale*) grows up to 5 feet tall and blooms from midsummer to fall. Its small yellow flowers are said to resemble “little suns” and were once used as snuff by pioneers.



TALL COREOPSIS (*Coreopsis tripteris*) can reach heights of 6 feet and is specialized to survive droughts. Goldfinches and butterflies are attracted to the yellow, daisy-like flowers that bloom from summer to early fall.



NEW ENGLAND ASTER (*Aster novae-angliae*) usually has a minimum of 40 petals on each flower! Color can range from bright purple to pale lavender. It blooms from late summer to fall.

