

NATURAL VEGETATION IN STATE PARKS AND TRAILS

INDICATOR: Acres of remnant and restored prairie in state parks and along state trails

WHY IS THIS INDICATOR IMPORTANT?

At the time of European settlement, Minnesota was home to 18 million acres of prairie. Today only 1 percent remains. Most endangered, threatened, and special concern species in Minnesota are prairie dwellers. In addition, nearly 140 wildlife species found in Minnesota’s prairie parkland province have been classified as species of greatest conservation need. These species are harmed by the loss and degradation of prairies. Prairie restoration helps preserve prairie-dependent species, and species of greatest conservation need such as bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows. Restored prairies can provide a seed source for future restorations. In addition, prairie restoration provides opportunities for visitors to experience a window into Minnesota’s past landscapes.

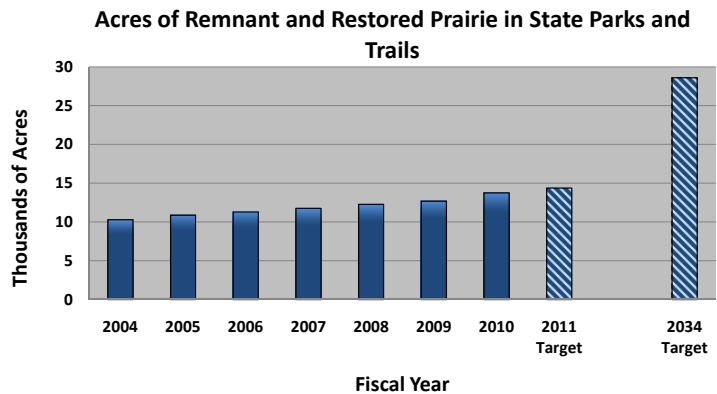
WHAT IS DNR DOING?

Minnesota statutes directs state parks to preserve, perpetuate, and restore natural features and to provide maximum potential for appreciation, conservation, and enjoyment of scenic and natural features through which state trails may pass. DNR starts restoration on about 625 acres of prairie each year and manages about 13,500 acres of prairie. We have identified an additional 14,800 acres in need of restoration.

DNR educates visitors about prairies, their historic importance, and their value today. For example, the Prairie Care program at Wild River State Park, begun in 1993, trains visitors to help collect and plant prairie seed in the park. Thousands of schoolchildren, scout groups, families, and others visit the park to help restore prairie.

TARGET: Initiate restoration of at least 625 acres of prairie annually.

DNR’s long-term goal is to manage 28,600 acres of remnant and restored prairie in the state park and trail system by approximately 2034. An investment of about 625 acres of prairie restoration per year is needed to achieve this goal.



Annual totals of acres of remnant and restored prairie in state parks and trails. An additional 14,800 acres is targeted for restoration over the next 25 years.



A restored prairie at Lake Louise State Park in southeastern Minnesota

LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- Prairie Care program at Wild River State Park:
www.mndnr.gov/education/teachers/fieldtrips/wildriver_prairie.html
www.mndnr.gov/volunteer/marapro3/seed.html