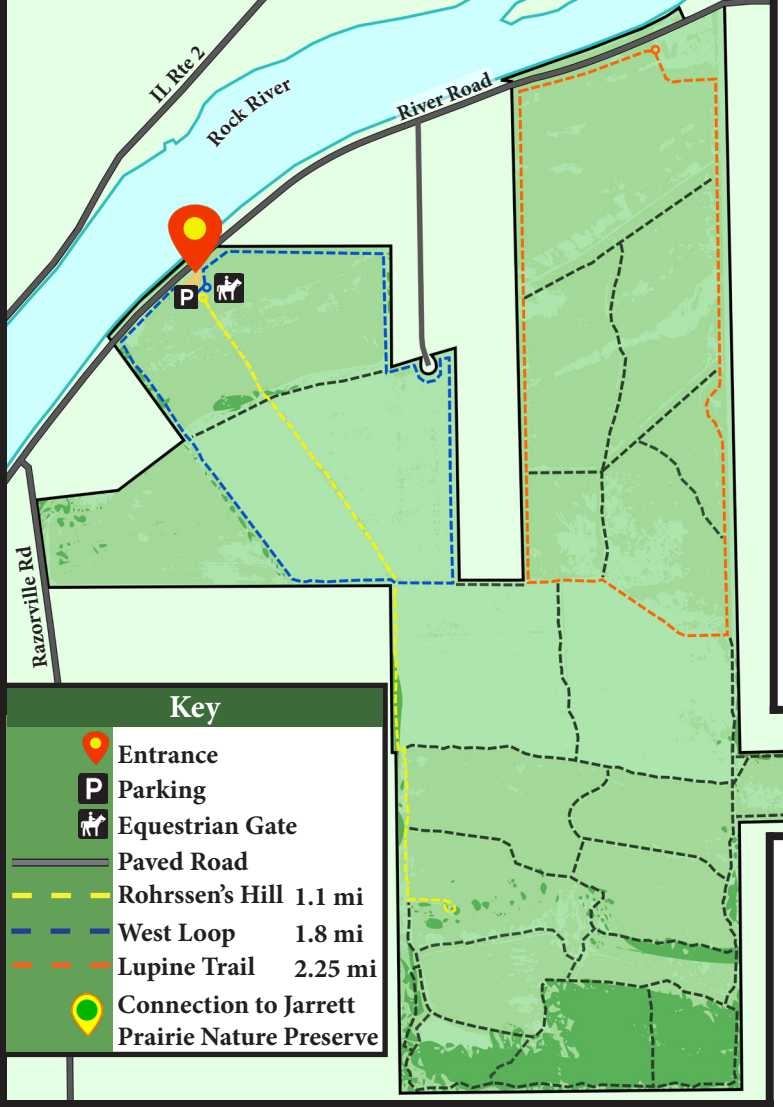


Stephen J. and Deirdre Nardi Equine Prairie Preserve

Address: 6651 N. River Road, Oregon
Year Acquired: 2003
Acreage: 557
Total Trails: 10 miles
Special Use: Equestrian
Habitats: Dry dolomite & sandy soil prairies, oak savannas & woodlands



The Nardi Equine Preserve has 10 miles of scenic trails and is the only preserve that allows horseback riding (bring your own horse). Contained within are prairie remnants, oak savannas, oak forests and sandy soil prairie recreations. If you are looking for a quiet place to relax and take in a scenic view, be sure to make the hike to the top of Rohrssen's Hill located in the south section of the preserve. Sit under the old bur oak trees and take in the view, beautiful in every season.



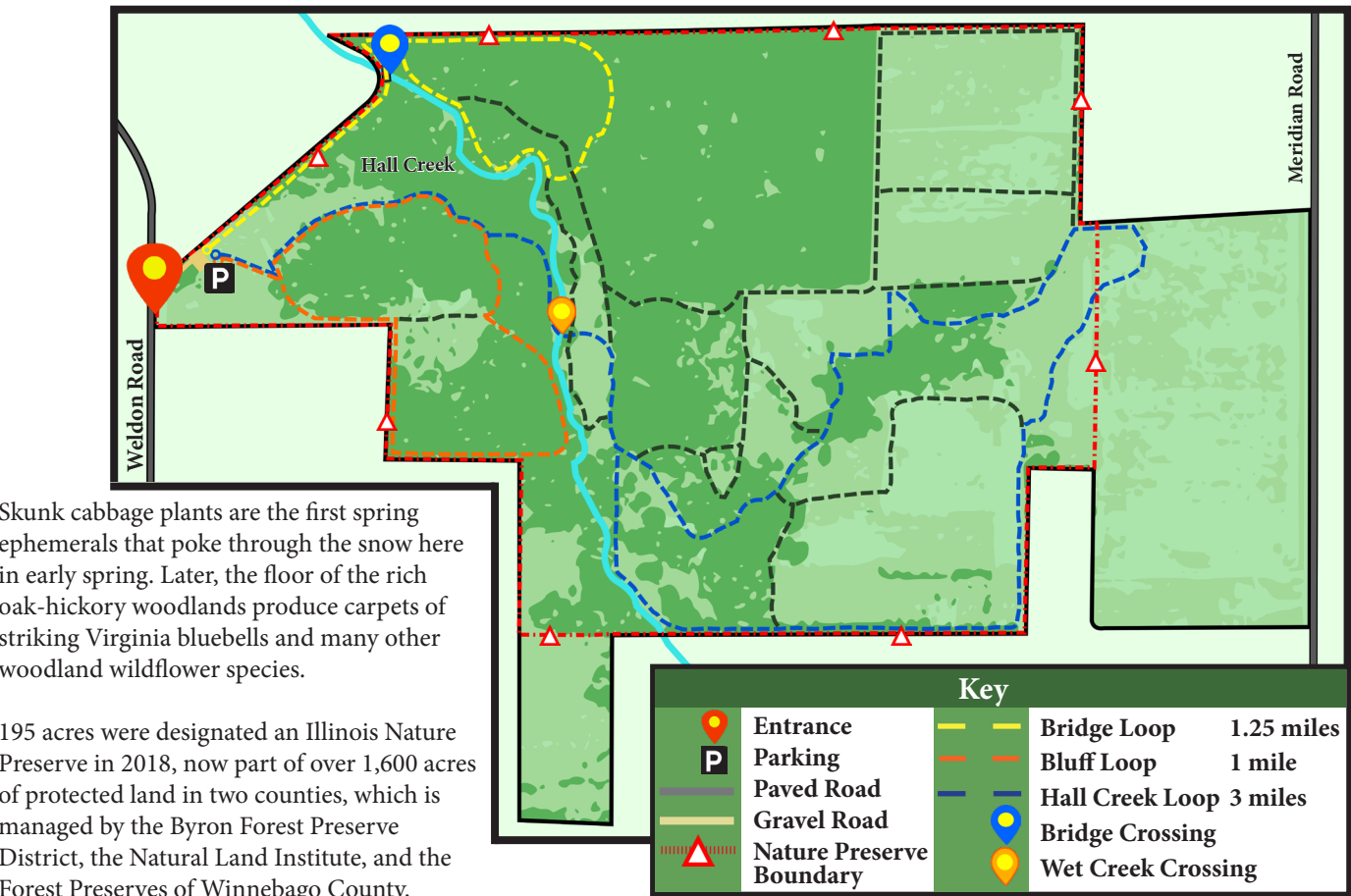
South trails are closed during archery hunting season, mid-October to mid-January. The entire preserve is closed during firearm and muzzle loader hunting weekends.

In the early spring, several acres on the north side of this preserve offer a stunning display of blue lupine flowers. This sandy soil prairie is also home to prickly pear cactus, one of the few native to Illinois. Many species of prairie flowers attract butterflies and other pollinators. Migratory grassland birds, such as Eastern meadowlarks, bobolinks, and Northern harriers, make the Nardi Preserve a seasonal stopover.

Howard Colman Hall Creek Preserve

Address: 12749 Weldon Road, Rockford
Year Acquired: 2010
Acreage: 321
Total Trails: 7.5 miles
Habitats: Oak-hickory forest, oak savannas, prairie, creek

The woodlands of this preserve are home to a wide variety of birds, such as warblers, orioles, tanagers, pileated woodpeckers, and red-headed woodpeckers. Limestone dells are found along Hall Creek, which flows through the entire length of the preserve and attracts water-loving birds such as belted kingfishers, wood ducks, and great blue herons. Many rare species of plants and animals can be seen here. Dogs are not allowed at this preserve.



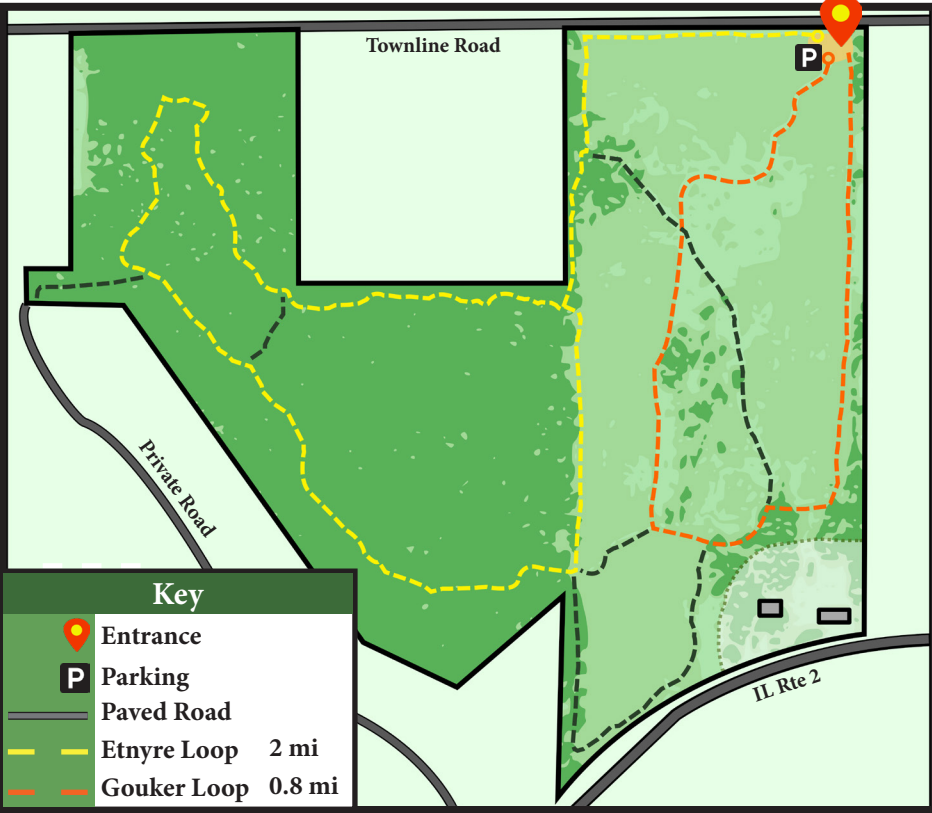
Skunk cabbage plants are the first spring ephemerals that poke through the snow here in early spring. Later, the floor of the rich oak-hickory woodlands produce carpets of striking Virginia bluebells and many other woodland wildflower species.

195 acres were designated an Illinois Nature Preserve in 2018, now part of over 1,600 acres of protected land in two counties, which is managed by the Byron Forest Preserve District, the Natural Land Institute, and the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County.

Etnyre Forest Preserve

Address: 1700 Townline Road, Oregon
Year Acquired: 1990
Acreage: 47.5
Total Trails: 2 miles
Special Use: Leashed dogs allowed on trails
Habitats: Oak forest

These two preserves are located adjacent to each other and can be seen from Illinois Route 2, but parking access is from Townline Road. The Ripplinger-Gouker prairie was restored from agricultural fields with native seed brought in from other sites, while the Etnyre woods were improved through removal of invasive plants and thinning of the understory. These preserves allow leashed dogs on the trails.



Ripplinger-Gouker Prairie Preserve

Address: 1700 Townline Road, Oregon
Year Acquired: 2008
Acreage: 52
Total Trails: 2 miles
Special Use: Leashed dogs allowed on trails
Habitats: Prairie and oak savannas



These preserves show an abundance of wildflowers from spring to fall, including bloodroot, trillium, purple prairie clover, coneflowers, and goldenrod.



He-Leo Two Rivers Preserve

Address: 6065 Illinois Route 2, Oregon
Year Acquired: 1982
Acreage: 48
Special Use: Leashed dogs allowed
Habitats: Wetland, oak-hickory forest, prairie
This preserve was the first land donated to the Byron Forest Preserve District in 1982, and is named in honor of Helen and Leo Piper. The property was expanded in 2013 and can be accessed by vehicle via Illinois Route 2 or by water along the Rock River. The site features a floating boat dock, kayak launch, picnic shelter, and volleyball court. Toward the boundary along the Leaf River lie man-made vernal ponds that ensure this section of Rock River floodplain is a fruitful wetland habitat.



Mill Creek Wetland

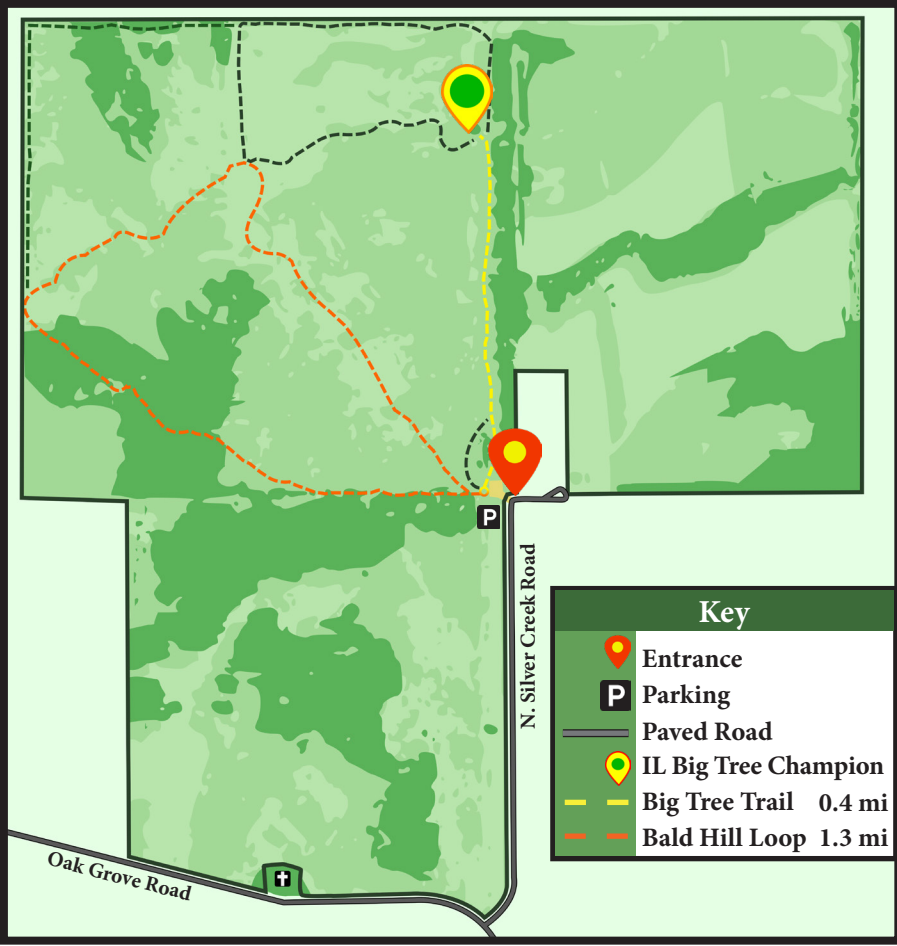
Location: West of Creekside Subdivision, IL Route 2, Byron
Year Acquired: 2017
Acreage: 82
Habitats: Wetland, creek, floodplain
This preserve along Mill Creek on the north side of the Rock River is currently undeveloped and has no public access. This wetland is a refuge for dozens of species of migratory waterfowl and songbirds as well as turtles, frogs, salamanders, and muskrats.



Bald Hill Prairie Preserve

Address: 5502 North Silver Creek Road, Mt. Morris
Year Acquired: 2017
Acreage: 380
Total Trails: 3 miles
Habitats: Gravel hill prairie, oak savannas

Bald Hill Prairie Preserve, long known for its scenic views, was acquired by the District in 2017 thanks to grants from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. Summer visitors should look for bobolinks, Eastern meadowlarks, grasshopper sparrows, Henslow's sparrows and dickcissels. Prairie remnants on this site contain endangered and threatened plants, including woolly milkweed and fringed puccoon.



Due to the many rare ground-nesting birds that make this preserve their home, no dogs are allowed here at any time. Please stay on the trails to minimize impact on birds and fragile plant populations.



This preserve is home to the biggest tree in the State of Illinois, a huge Eastern cottonwood that is 28.5 feet in circumference and 122 feet tall. The Illinois Big Tree Champion is located a short 0.4 mile walk north from the parking lot.

Welcome to the Byron Forest Preserve District

Preservation

Over 2,100 Acres of Preserves
Including dolomite tallgrass prairies, gravel hill prairies, sand prairies and prairie remnants, oak-hickory forests, oak savannas, and wetlands

447 Acres of Dedicated Nature Preserve
Protecting high-quality natural areas, in perpetuity, through dedication into the nationally acclaimed Illinois Nature Preserves System

Protecting Our Natural Heritage
Our preserves are home to 568 species of plants, including 2 federally endangered and 8 state endangered species

Restoring and Managing the Land
We carry out prescribed burns, remove invasive species, collect seed, propagate and plant seedlings, and work to restore rare and vital habitats

Protecting Pollinators
Our preserves are home to hundreds of species of wild bees, butterflies, moths, and other insects

Teaching Stewardship
Programs, classes, events, and field trips help others understand the importance of protecting the natural world that we all share

Education

Museums
Our Jarrett Prairie Center Museum is award-winning, free, and open year-round

Night Sky Viewing
The Weiskopf Observatory is free and open at dark on Saturdays year-round, also open Tuesdays in June, July, and August

The Biggest Tree in Illinois
The Bald Hill Prairie Preserve is home to the Illinois Big Tree Champion

Programs and Events
Free lectures, concerts, classes, and hikes--visit our calendar at www.byronforestpreserve.com

Field Trips
Free for area schools--prairie and forest ecology, astronomy, stream study, farm life, geology, natural history, and more

Badge Workshops
Boy and Girl Scout badges are available year-round

Nature and Birdwatching
231 species of birds, 33 species of mammals, and 18 species of reptiles and amphibians

Volunteering
Help with events, preschool, woodworking, bluebird inventory, or invasive species removal

Recreation

Hiking and running
More than 35 miles of trails on nine preserves

Horseback Riding
Bring your horse and ride the trails at the Stephen J. and Deirdre Nardi Equine Prairie Preserve

Dog Walking
Allowed on leash at Ripplinger-Gouker Prairie and Etnyre Forest Preserves, He-Leo Preserve, and along the Don Hamer Recreation Path

Fishing
He-Leo Two Rivers Preserve and Jarrett Prairie Nature Preserve River Park (wheelchair access)

Canoeing and Kayaking
Use the He-Leo Two Rivers Preserve Kayak Launch to access both the Rock and Leaf Rivers

Picnicking
Shelters at the Jarrett Prairie Nature Preserve, Ripplinger-Gouker Prairie Preserve, He-Leo Two Rivers Preserve, and Bald Hill Prairie Preserve

Geocaching
Many beginner and family-friendly caches are hidden at the Jarrett Prairie Nature Preserve

Golfing and Dining
PrairieView Golf Club, Prairie Grass Pub, and PrairieFire Golf & Grill offer excellent options

Special thanks to Ogile County GIS for their assistance.

This map is intended to be used for recreational purposes only.

Connect with us...

Facebook Instagram YouTube Twitter

We are turning 40!

The Byron Forest Preserve District is located on the rolling hills along the Rock River in northern Ogile County. Established in 1980, the district currently manages more than 2,100 acres of protected land at nine different preserves.

The mission of the Byron Forest Preserve District is preservation, education, and recreation. Our agency is devoted to purchasing, protecting, and managing natural areas, both to increase biodiversity and to conserve the rare plants and animals of our region.

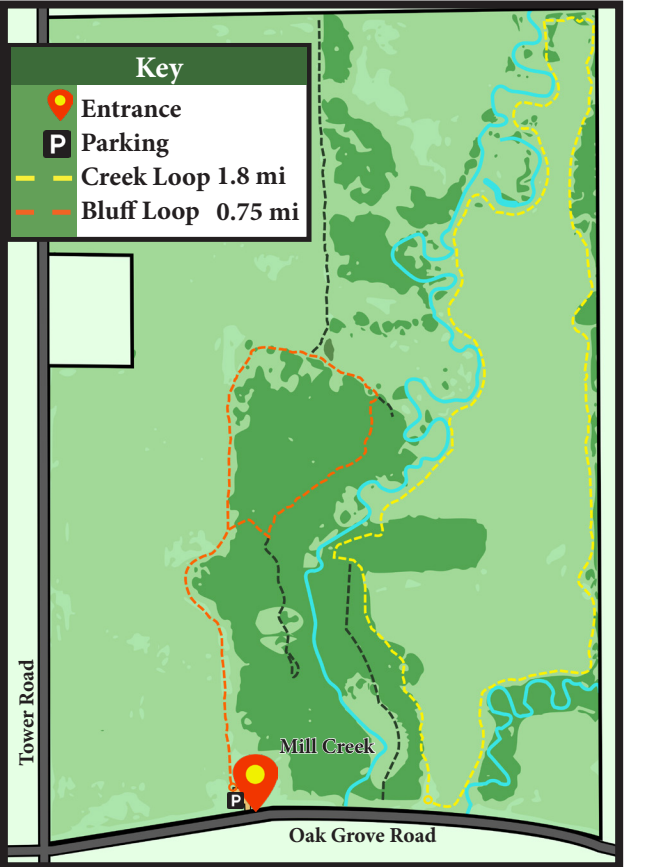
In case of an emergency, dial 911

info@byronforestpreserve.com
815-234-8535
Byron, IL 61010
7993 N River Road

Byron Forest Preserve District

Barrick Oaks Homestead Preserve

Address: 3494 Oak Grove Road, Byron
Year Acquired: 2010
Acreage: 228
Total Trails: 4 miles
Habitats: Prairie, oak savanna, creek wetland



This preserve has two distinct features: steep, wooded limestone bluffs on the west side of the preserve, and the always changing Mill Creek wetland along the eastern section. Both can be accessed from the gravel lot, but please walk along Oak Grove Road to cross the creek at the paved bridge. This section of Mill Creek varies between shallow, rocky riffles and deep, clay-lined pools. Several horseshoe bends and ponds offer habitat to beavers, otters, ducks, herons, and snapping turtles. Restoration efforts at the preserve are ongoing.

Byron Forest Preserve District Main Site

Heritage Farm Museum

8059 N. River Road
Byron, IL 61010

In 1843, Charlie Wilbur and his family came from New York and settled across the river from Byron, Illinois, and the farm remained in the Wilbur family for five generations. The Byron Forest Preserve has restored the farm buildings so that future generations can explore the early country life of immigrants and settlers. Please enjoy a free self-guided tour through the grout house and barns.

Open daily Apr. 1–Oct. 31
Mon-Fri 8am–4:30pm
Sat-Sun 10am–4pm

1. Grout House
2. Chicken Coop
3. Carriage House
4. Hog Barn
5. Corn Crib
6. Horse Barn

Administration and Education

1. Jarrett Prairie Center
7993 N. River Road
P.O. Box 1075
Byron, IL 61010
815-234-8535
byronforestpreserve.com
2. Weiskopf Observatory
3. Keller Education Center
4. & 6. Picnic Shelter
5. Playground

PrairieView Golf Club

1. PrairieView Golf Club
6734 N. German Church Road
P.O. Box 1075
Byron, IL 61010
815-234-GOLF (4653)
prairieviewgolf.com
2. Golf Pavilion
3. PrairieFire Golf & Grill
815-234-FIRE (3473)

Maintenance and Restoration

1. Turf Care Center
2. Golf Maintenance
3. Private Residence

Land Management Center
6845 N. German Church Road
Byron, IL 61010

Jarrett Prairie Nature Preserve

Address: 7993 N. River Road, Byron
Year Acquired: 1985
Acreage: 420
Total Trails: 9.5 miles
Habitats: Dolomite prairies, oak savannas, and woodlands

The Jarrett Prairie Nature Preserve is the best known preserve in the Byron Forest Preserve District. These rolling hills of tallgrass prairie, oak savannas, and oak woodlands have been an Illinois Nature Preserve since 1992. In fact, the Byron Forest Preserve District was founded in 1980 to protect the rare prairie remnants that were discovered at this site in 1978. No dogs are allowed inside this nature preserve in order to protect rare grassland birds and other wildlife, but may remain on a leash along the Don Hamer Recreation Path.

A wide variety of prairie plants can be seen here beginning in spring, such as pasque flowers, shooting stars, birds foot violets, and hoary puccoon. In the summer, these give way to pale purple coneflowers, compass plants, bergamot, purple prairie clover, and prairie sunflowers.

Many species of migrating birds make the Jarrett Prairie their home. Frequently seen birds include Eastern bluebirds, Eastern meadowlarks, tree swallows, barn swallows, dickcissels, red-headed woodpeckers, brown headed cowbirds, red tailed hawks, and Northern harriers.

Preserve Guide Trail Maps Facilities

Celebrating 40 Years
Byron Forest Preserve District
Est. 1980

Preserves and Facilities

- Byron Forest Preserve District Main Site
 - Jarrett Prairie Nature Preserve
 - Jarrett Prairie Center
 - Keller Education Center
 - Weiskopf Observatory
 - Heritage Farm Museum and River Park
 - PrairieView Golf Club
 - PrairieFire Golf & Grill
- Stephen J. and Deirdre Nardi Equine Prairie Preserve
- Ripplinger/Gouker Prairie Preserve
- Etnyre Forest Preserve
- Howard Colman Hall Creek Preserve
- Barrick Oaks Homestead Preserve
- He-Leo Two Rivers Preserve
- Bald Hill Prairie Preserve
- Mill Creek Wetland
 - No amenities

Hiking Wildlife Viewing Picnic Shelter Vending Water Information Museum AED Observatory

Kayak Launch Fishing Gift Shop Skidding Golf Dining Snack Bar Alcohol ATM

Playground Informative Panel Horseback Riding Dogs Allowed Restrooms Seasonal Toilet Cross Country Ski Rental