

A Preserve Like No Other

Five Ridge Prairie is a state preserve managed by the Plymouth County Conservation Board. Five Ridge was originally purchased by the Iowa Nature Conservancy from the Banks family in 1981.

The Loess Hills are a land formation created by thick deposits of wind blown silt. The Loess Hills can be found from Plymouth to Fremont Counties in Iowa. The Yellow River Valley, in China, is the only other place on Earth with loess deposits as thick.

Historically, this land was grazed by elk and bison. It provided a home and hunting ground for American Indians. The hills provide an ecosystem similar to the drier western plains. Western plants and animals made their homes in the hills, such as yucca, prickly pear cactus, plains spadefoot toad, and prairie rattlesnakes.

As Euro-American settlers moved into the hills, the make up of the land changed. Bison and elk were replaced by cattle. With the loess soil being so easily erodible, farmers did not spend much time trying to plant row crops.

The Plymouth County Conservation Board has been working to reverse the effects years of fire suppression have created. As you walk through Five Ridge Prairie, you may notice burnt tracts of land in the timber and on the prairie. Prescribed fire, rotational grazing, and tree removal are all ways to help the prairie return strong.

The loess hills are a very unique ecosystem found right here in Plymouth County, Iowa. On these nearly 800 acres, you will experience prairie species common to historic Iowa as well as those found many miles to our west.



Words to Preserve by

- No Camping
- No Fires
- No Littering
- No Trapping
- No collection or destruction of soils, plants, and most animals.
- Restricted hunting is permitted
- No Motorized Vehicles
- No Bicycles
- No Horseback Riding
- Dogs Must Be On a Leash
- Leave only footprints, take only pictures

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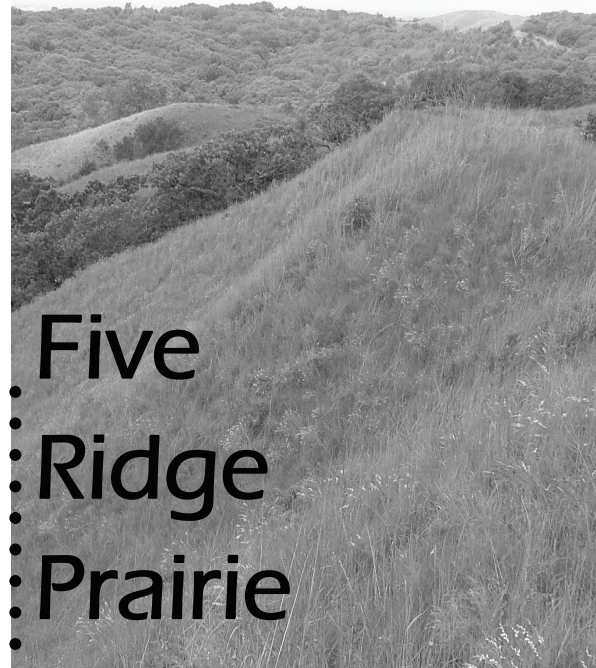
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Plymouth County Conservation Board



Five Ridge Prairie

...These bluffs may burn in the heat of the midday sun, they may be swept by the hot blasts of summer winds, or hidden in the whirling clouds of yellow dust...they are both restful and inspiring... there is no grander view... than that which is presented under such circumstances from their summits...

-Bohumil Shimek 1910

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