

**WILDLIFE PRESERVATION FUND GRANT #04-0180
"DISCOVERING THE PRAIRIE"**

Final Report

Introduction

The Robert Ridgway Grasslands Nature Preserve is a 40-acre prairie and wetland restoration area adjacent to Prairie Ridge State Natural Area. The interpretive trail and viewing platform is the only public access aside from roadside viewing in the PRSNA project area. There are two walking trails on the preserve which provide interpretive information for visitors. The purpose of this grant project was to provide more interpretive signs concerning prairie and wetland flora and fauna found here.

Materials and Budget

14 9x12 aluminum trail signs were purchased from Wilderness Graphics	\$435.00
14 9x12 frames for trail signs were purchased from Shelby Signs	490.00
Timbers and hardware for posts were purchased from Jesse B. Holt, Inc.	80.63
Total	\$1005.63

Match

Members of the Illinois Audubon Society provided the labor to set the posts and affix the signs. Value of Match \$300.00

Methods

Signs were purchased and custom-made frames completed. Metal framed signs were then attached to treated timbers, which were placed in the ground at appropriate locations along the trails.

Results

Additional signs along the trails will be enjoyed by the many early spring visitors coming to Robert Ridgway Grasslands Nature Preserve as part of their prairie-chicken viewing activities. Photos provided in accompanying disk.



Bluebird

The flash of bright blue and the musical call, *tr-ty*, help identify this bird. The bluebird is usually found in open woodlands or farmlands where it feeds on insects, berries and fruits. Competition from house sparrows and starlings for nesting places hurt the bluebird population, but it has adapted well to special nesting boxes.



Box Turtle

When danger threatens, the box turtle can withdraw tightly into its shell. Box turtles live on land, but can sometimes be found soaking in a shallow puddle. It is known for its long life; ages of 30-40 years are common. The box turtle feeds on plants, fruits, berries, and some insects.