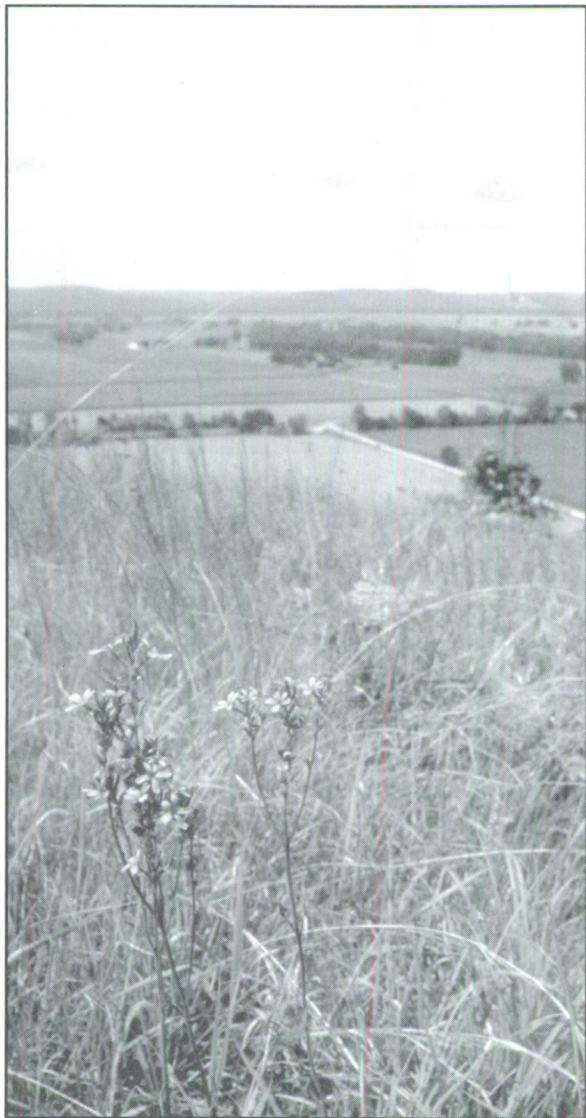


# Fults Hill Prairie

N A T U R E   P R E S E R V E

# Kidd Lake Marsh

N A T U R A L   A R E A



**Illinois**

Department of

**Natural Resources**

## Seasonal Guide

### Kidd Lake Marsh Natural Area

#### Spring

Listen for frogs (male frogs looking for mates in early spring make a lot of noise on warm humid nights): western chorus frog (sounds like running a finger along a comb), northern spring peeper (high-pitched, repetitive peep), American toad (high-pitch, extended trill), southern leopard frog (cackle-like call), bullfrog (deep, mournful call “Glu-ub, Glu-ub”).

#### Summer

Wetland plants (not necessarily flowering at this time): cattails, lotus, smartweeds, cordgrass, river bulrush, false aster, arrowleaf.

Wetland birds: great blue herons, little blue herons, great egrets, sora, coots.

#### Fall

Waterfowl: Canada geese, snow geese, blue-winged teal, green-winged teal, mallards, wood ducks, gadwall.

#### Winter

Those dome-shaped mounds dotting the marsh are muskrat houses. Muskrats are an aquatic mammal smaller than a beaver with a rat-like tail. Muskrat houses are made of wetland plants, and each is home to one family. They are mostly vegetarian, but also eat clams, frogs and fish on occasion.

## Loess Hill Prairie

A hill prairie is an opening on a forested slope, usually a south- or west-facing bluff. Loess is a term for the type of dry, well-drained soil found along many portions of the bluffs of the Mississippi River. This loess soil layer resulted from a fine silt that was blown up from the floodplain and deposited on the bluffs over hundreds of years. Certain plants are adapted to the harsh, dry conditions of the loess hill prairies, creating unique communities at these sites. Grasses such as side-oats gramma, little bluestem, big bluestem, and Indian grass dominate. Wildfires once helped to maintain these open areas, preventing trees from taking over. DNR now manages hill prairies using controlled burns to mimic that historically natural process.

## Limestone Glade

Open, prairie-like areas on more shallow soils with extensive limestone outcropping, are called limestone glades. Vegetation is more sparse and shorter than the prairie's vegetation. The dominant grasses are little bluestem and side-oats gramma. Common forbs include American aloe, purple prairie clover, false boneset and Missouri orange coneflower. Some of the characteristic glade plants are more typical of the Missouri Ozarks and are limited in Illinois to this preserve. The “Lost Glades” were not actively managed by fire and other brush control techniques until the early 1990s and have become dominated by trees.



## Forests

The forests of this preserve are mostly on dry sites, with black oak, post oak and black hickory. Forests of the ravines have more moisture and contain white oak, red oak, chinquapin oak, sugar maple and hickories. In dry upland areas, such as those surrounding the “Lost Glades” and loess hill prairies, there used to be savanna communities. A savanna is an open woodland with a thin, scattered distribution of trees, primarily oak species, and a mixture of grasses. You can spot these areas by looking for oaks with large spreading limbs that indicate they were not competing with other trees as they grew.

## Fults Hill Prairie Nature Preserve Kidd Lake Marsh Natural Area

The 997-acre Fults Hill Prairie Nature Preserve and Kidd Lake Marsh Natural Area is owned and managed by the Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Most of this unique natural area was purchased between 1970 and 1976. From the uplands of Fults Hill Prairie Nature Preserve to the lowlands of Kidd Lake Marsh, a variety of plants and animals can be found, some common and some found nowhere else in the state.



Fults Hill Prairie Nature Preserve consists of 532 acres of uplands and includes woodland, prairie and glade communities. It has the largest complex of high quality loess hill prairies in Illinois. Prairies were once the dominant natural community in Illinois. The Illinois Nature Preserve system was established to give the highest level of protection to the state's few remaining high quality natural areas; this site was dedicated as a preserve in 1970. In 1986 it was recognized federally by the U.S. Department of Interior as a National Natural Landmark.

Kidd Lake Marsh natural area is an example of the once expansive wetlands of the Mississippi floodplain known as the American Bottoms. The marsh was historically part of an 800-acre lake bed, and was once home to a variety of wetland birds, some now rare in Illinois. It is an important rest stop for migrating waterfowl and continues to provide critical habitat to a diverse range of birds, as well as amphibians and reptiles.

Visitors are welcome, but please help protect the area by not disturbing or removing anything. All natural features are protected by law.

## Seasonal Guide

### Fults Hill Prairie Nature Preserve

#### Spring

Spring woodland wildflowers in bloom (March-early May): bloodroot, spring beauty, bellwort, false solomons seal, toothwort, may apple, dutchmans breeches, trout lily, wild geranium, wild columbine, phlox, violets, bluebells, jack-in-the pulpit.

Spring Migrants: Tennessee warbler, Kentucky warbler, blue-winged warbler, yellow-winged warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, black-and-white warbler, American redstart, rose-breasted grosbeak, black-throated green warbler, prairie warbler, worm-eating warbler, wood thrush.

#### Summer

Prairie wildflowers (flowering early summer): false bone-set, blue hearts, pale purple coneflower, flowering spurge, prickly pear cactus, hairy petunia, rose verbena, butterfly milkweed, spiderwort, tickseed coreopsis, mountain mint.

Prairie plants (flowering mid-to late summer): big bluestem, little bluestem, side-oats gramma, Indian grass, sky blue aster, silky aster, partridge pea, white prairie clover, purple prairie clover, rough blazing star, goldenrod, pale purple coneflower, Missouri orange coneflower, rattlesnake master, flowering spurge.

#### Fall

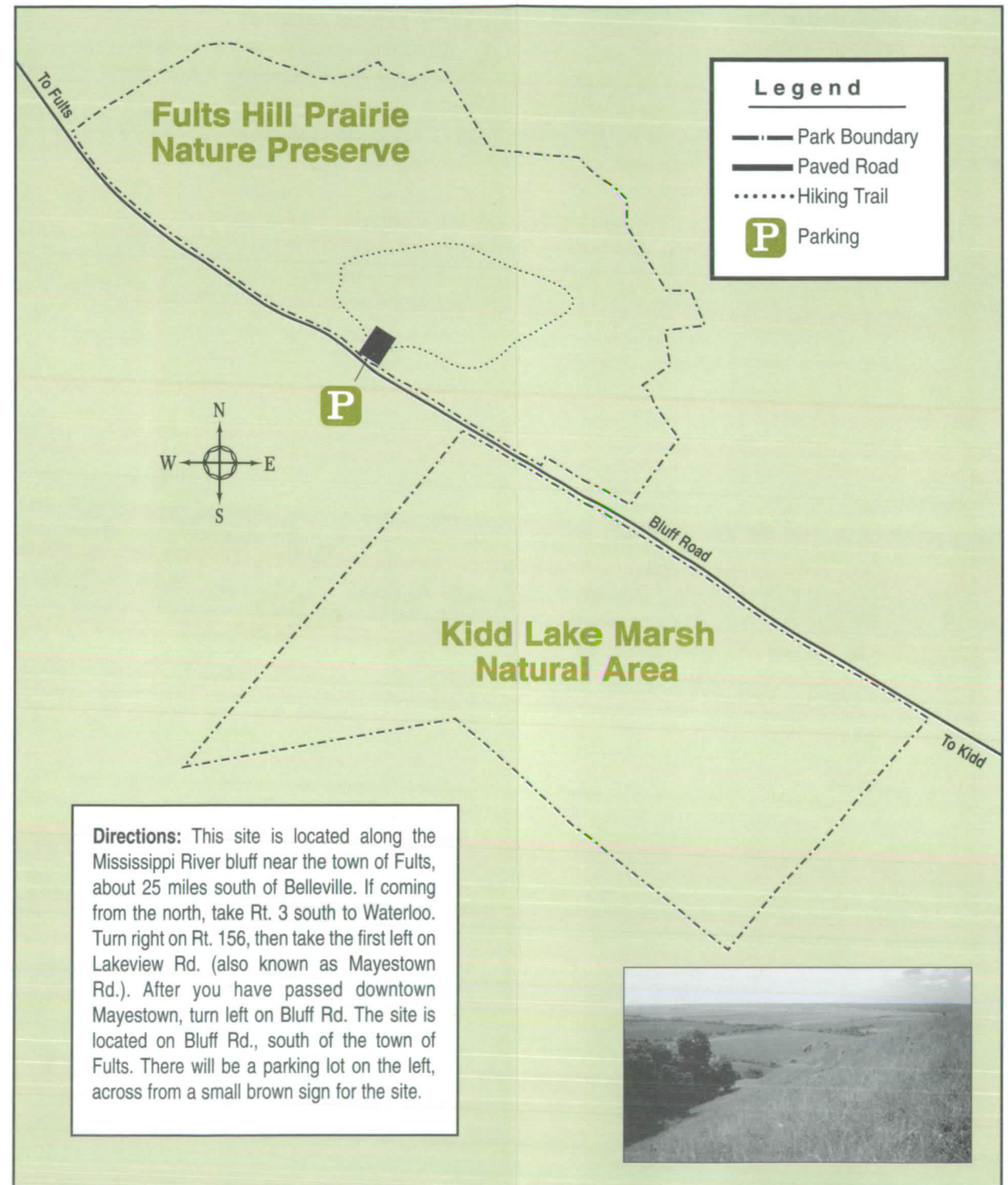
Fall color display (mid-to late October): take a drive down Bluff Road, look above and see the turkey vultures (they have a large wingspan and glide with their wings in a "v" shape, often seen in groups of 5 or 6).

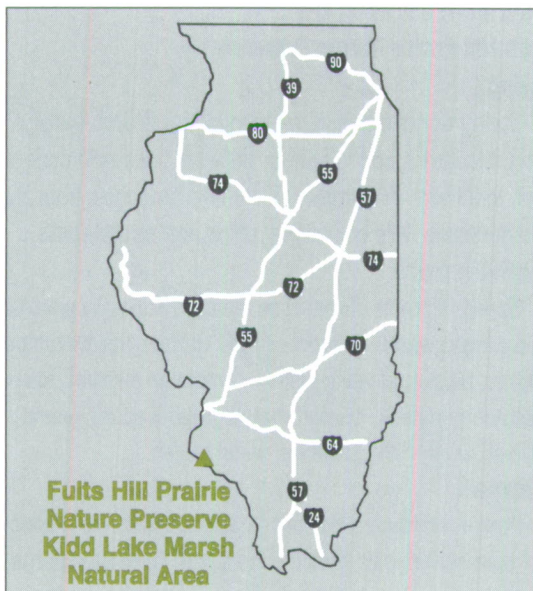
Migrating hawks (Sept.-Nov.): Red-tailed hawks, broad-winged hawks, Coopers hawks, sharp shinned hawks, osprey, northern harriers.

#### Winter

Enjoy following animal tracks in the snow: you should see the tracks of deer, rabbits, raccoons, opossums, squirrels and possibly coyote and fox.

American bald eagle (late Jan. to mid-Feb.): sometimes you can see bald eagles, which have migrated south during the winter, soaring above. It's a great view from the bluff top.





**Fults Hill Prairie Nature Preserve  
Kidd Lake Marsh Natural Area**  
4301 South Lake Drive  
Chester, IL 62233, (618) 826-2706

- While groups of 25 or more are welcome and encouraged to use the park's facilities, they are required to register in advance with the site office to avoid crowding or scheduling conflicts.
- At least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors.
- Pets must be kept on leashes at all times.
- Actions by nature can result in closed roads and other facilities.
- We hope you enjoy your stay. Remember, take only memories, leave only footprints.
- For more information on state parks, write to the Department of Natural Resources, Clearinghouse, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271, call (217) 782-6302 or visit our website at [www.dnr.state.il.us](http://www.dnr.state.il.us).
- For more information on tourism in Illinois, call the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Bureau of Tourism at 1-800-2CONNECT.
- Hearing-impaired individuals may call the Department of Natural Resources' TTY number, (217) 782-9175, or use the Ameritech Relay Number, 1-800-526-0844.

Equal opportunity to participate in programs of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and those funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies is available to all individuals regardless of race, sex, national origin, disability, age, religion or other nonmerit factors. If you believe you have been discriminated against, contact the funding source's civil rights office and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, IDNR, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271; (217) 785-0067; TTY (217) 782-9175.

This information may be provided in an alternative format if required. Contact the DNR Clearinghouse at (217) 782-7498 for assistance.

