

About Holland Sand Prairie State Natural Area

Once part of a vast series of sand prairies on terraces of the Upper Mississippi River, the 61-acre Holland Sand Prairie sits atop a Mississippi River terrace—the La Crosse-Galesville Terrace—created during the last ice age, about 12,000 years ago. Its dunes and hollows are the only undisturbed aeolian (wind-formed) landforms in the area.

The property was part of a larger farm for many years, and the lower areas were primarily used for grazing land and hayfields. The dune ridges contain large numbers of sand-prairie plants that appear undisturbed since European settlement. Although settlement introduced many exotic species, native prairie plants had a survival advantage because the land is sandy, well drained, and dry.

Roughly 150 species of plants have been identified, some of which are threatened or of special concern.

George Varnum, a local prairie enthusiast who lived near the prairie, contacted the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources about Holland Sand Prairie in 1997, and in 2004 MVC reached a deal to preserve it.

MVC holds a conservation easement on the property, but the prairie is owned by the Town of Holland. Management and maintenance of the prairie are shared between the Town, MVC, the Prairie Enthusiasts, and the Friends of Holland Sand Prairie.

Activities allowed

Hiking, showshoeing, wildlife observation, hunting

Activities NOT allowed

Non-pedestrian travel, dog-walking, seed collection, taking flora or fauna

Please respect landowners near Conservancy tracts by staying on the trail and turning back when signs indicate private property.

Some wildflowers seen at Holland Sand Prairie State Natural Area

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alum root | <input type="checkbox"/> Missouri goldenrod |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird's-foot violet | <input type="checkbox"/> Pasqueflower |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-eyed susan | <input type="checkbox"/> Pasture thistle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue vervain | <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie blue-eyed grass |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Butterfly milkweed | <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie cinquefoil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canada milkvetch | <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie ragwort |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clustered poppy mallow | <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie smoke |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common evening primrose | <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie violet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common ironweed | <input type="checkbox"/> Purple prairie clover |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coreopsis | <input type="checkbox"/> Rough blazing star |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cream wild indigo | <input type="checkbox"/> Showy sunflower |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dotted mint | <input type="checkbox"/> Silky prairie clover |
| <input type="checkbox"/> False toadflax | <input type="checkbox"/> Skullcap |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goat's rue | <input type="checkbox"/> Smooth blue aster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hairy hawkweed | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiderwort |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hairy puccoon | <input type="checkbox"/> Thimbleweed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heath aster | <input type="checkbox"/> White prairie clover |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hoary vervain | <input type="checkbox"/> Wild bergamot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadplant | <input type="checkbox"/> Wild rose |



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HIKING MAP

Holland Sand Prairie State Natural Area

La Crosse County, Wisconsin



Hiking Holland Sand Prairie State Natural Area

(W7781 County Rd MH, Holmen, WI)

The trail follows the boundaries of an open, rolling prairie.

How to get to the trailhead/parking lot from La Crosse: Follow Hwy 53 north to County Rd MH. Turn left onto McHugh Rd and follow it to the trailhead, which is just past (west of) Beaver Builders' Supply. Trailhead and parking area are on the left (south) side of MH.

1 Start at the kiosk at the parking area and head either east or west along a 1.3-mile mowed trail along the property's perimeter.

At times, other paths may be mowed so that you can explore the interior of the property.



Beaver
Builders'
Supply

Key to Symbols

- P** Parking and kiosk
- Trail
- 1** Point of interest
- - - - Tract boundary
- Road

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