



How much biodiversity is within our mixed-grass prairie?



Help us determine how the park is doing with our prairie restoration efforts with this random-sampled ground cover study.

Your help is appreciated! No prior science or botany knowledge is needed.

Materials:

1. Clipboard with this paper and a pencil
2. Round, metal hoop
3. Adventure pack with field guides and a magnifying glass (optional)



Directions:

1. Choose a location. (See location section below.)
2. Drop the hoop in the vegetation near the trail. You will be kneeling on the ground so choose a spot wisely.
3. Look in and around your hoop. Make sure there are no animals (ie: snakes) or plants (ie: thistles) that can harm you.
4. Answer the questions on the back of this page as well as you can. Feel free to use the field guides, iNaturalist app, or a park ranger to help you.
5. Bring all materials back to the visitor center. Turn in your completed ground cover questionnaire to a ranger. Please leave artifacts and plants where you found them.

Location (pick one then describe where on that trail):

Sample: Knife River Trail WHERE? West side of trail, 10 steps north of bench

Prairie Trail just north of visitor center WHERE?

Lower Hidatsa/Sakakawea Village Trail WHERE?

North Forest Trail (prairie area) WHERE?



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Preliminary Observations:

1. Is your spot in the sun or shade?
2. Are there trees or buildings around your spot? If so, where?
3. Has your spot been disturbed? (ie: mowed grass)
4. Are there any bugs or insects in your spot? If so, how many different kinds?
(Identify them if you can.)
5. What day and time are you making this observation?

What's in your Hoop?

Look closely at the plants in your hoop.

1. How many different kinds of flowers do you see?
2. How many different kinds of green plants do you see?
3. How many different kinds of grasses do you see?
4. What is most common in your hoop: grass, flower, or shrub?
5. Describe the most common plant to the best of your ability. Use field guides to help you identify it (optional).
6. Use the rest of the page to describe and identify as many plants in your hoop as possible.