

A Changed Landscape

At the time of early settlement, Kentucky looked very different than it does today. Over two million acres of the state were native prairie, maintained through the use of fire by American Indians over thousands of years. Exclusion of fire, elimination of bison, and expanding human settlement led to a large decline in native prairie habitat.

Healthy prairies, full of a diversity of native grasses and wildflowers, are rare. Many species of plants and animals are found only in these ecosystems. Without help, these species will continue to decline.



Photo by Steve Bishop

Both nature and humans have used fire to regulate the health and bounty of native prairies. Fire is still used today to maintain the delicate balance of human use and conservation.

Photo by Orla Minor
The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy works to restore prairies to their natural state by removing invasive species and burning to promote new growth.

Photo by Shelly Morris
The Nature Conservancy

Long-term protection of native prairies includes monitoring plants and animals.

Prairie: an ecological community in which the dominant plants are native grasses and wildflowers.

