

Hike the Rankin Ridge, Elk Mountain, or the Prairie Vista Nature Trail. Pick up a trail guide at the trailhead of either the Rankin Ridge or the Elk Mountain Nature Trail and read it on your walk. The Prairie Vista Trail has interpretive signs along the way for you to read.

**The Rankin Ridge Trail** takes you through the forested area of the park. Forest habitats are important to many animals and plants. Match the term on the left with its definition.

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|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. Mixed-grass Prairie ____ | A. The most important factor that determines what plants will grow in an area.           |
| 2. Water ____               | B. A standing dead tree that could become a nesting site for woodpeckers and other birds |
| 3. Snags ____               | C. Helps keep the forest from expanding onto the prairie.                                |
| 4. Ponderosa Pine ____      | D. Found on the ridges and prefers arid environments and rocky soils.                    |
| 5. Fire ____                | E. Contains grasses from both the short and tall grass prairies.                         |



On the **Elk Mountain or Prairie Vista Trail** you will hike through the mixed-grass prairie. This diverse habitat is unique because it contains a mixture of both tall and short grasses. The edges between the forest and the prairie also provide diverse habitats. Why is diversity important? \_\_\_\_\_

Take a few minutes to look closely at the prairie grasses. How many different types of grasses can you see? Circle any of the grasses that you find.



Needle and Thread

Little Bluestem

Blue Grama

Buffalo Grass

Side Oats Grama