

enthusiasts of all ages. Outdoors, visitors can explore 6.5 miles of hiking and cross country skiing trails that wind through prairie and savanna restoration to the banks of the Fox River, or enjoy a picnic overlooking the prairie.



for nature variety of programs and exhibits throughout the year



The Prairieview Education Center main building was once the elaborate home of Otto and Hazel Rhoades. Otto was the founder and president of the former Sun Electric Company in Crystal Lake. He designed and built a state of the art 1940's barn and a 7,500 square foot home on the property in 1945. McHenry County Conservation District purchased the property in 1993 and began redesigning the home to fulfill the need for an educational center in the growing southeast quadrant of the county.

History

Exploration Station Located inside Prairieview Education Center, this interactive room features several hands-on activities that help children learn more about the natural world surrounding them. A puppet theatre, themed book bags and nature boxes, computer programs, books, board games and puzzles are just a few of the activities available. The theme of the Exploration Station changes every three months to highlight the seasonal changes taking place in the environment.



Backyard Native Garden This exciting exhibit uses a palette of native plants to showcase the benefits of natural landscaping and inspire others to "go native" in their own backyards. Visitors can learn about different examples of native landscaping by touring seven different stations, including the Native Vine Garden, Butterfly Garden, Backyard Prairie, Natural Prairie, Native Shrub Garden, Rain Garden and Prairie Garden Area.



Environmental Education for All Ages The Prairieview Education Center serves thousands of McHenry County residents annually by offering tree and low-cost nature programs, youth field trips, summer camps, and school field trips. Open daily, this facility hosts traveling exhibits, a reference library, and a family drop-in activity room. Outdoors, guests can explore the backyard native garden, learn how to identify resident bird species, spot wild animal tracks, or use microscopes and binoculars to observe some of the creatures that call this conservation area home. Helpful staff is always on-hand to provide visitors with program information as well as answer nature-related inquiries.



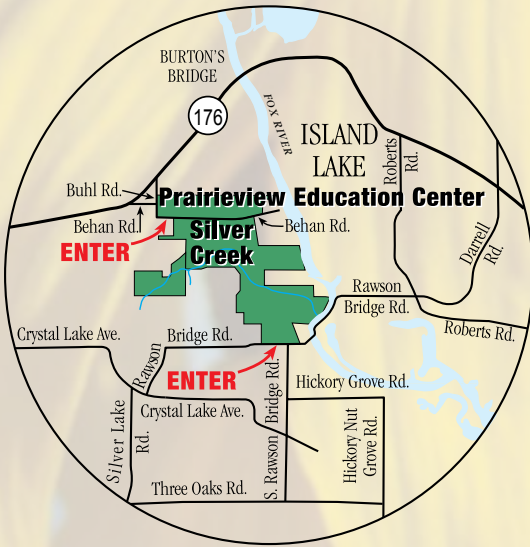
Nature's Classroom

A Place to Grow

Prairieview

Education Center in Silver Creek Conservation Area

General Information



Prairieview Education Center
2112 Behan Road, Crystal Lake, IL 60014
815-479-5779

April - October Hours:
Monday - Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

November - March Hours:
Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.



McHenry County Conservation District
18410 U.S. Highway 14
Woodstock, IL 60098
(815) 338-6223 www.MCCDistrict.org



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Site Rules

Respect the Land No person shall in any way remove, disturb, harm or destroy plant or animal life within conservation areas. The introduction of any plant or animal into an area is also prohibited.

Sites Hours Open sunrise to sunset unless otherwise posted.

Picnics Patrons are welcome to use the Prairieview picnic area on a first-come, first served basis. To use the Silver Creek picnic area, groups over 15 in number must secure a permit and reserve the shelter for a fee from Brookdale Administration Office at least 10 working days in advance. Groups with 15 or less may use the shelter on a first come, first served basis, unless it is otherwise reserved.

Trails Enjoy a hike on over seven miles of scenic nature trails! Please stay on-trail when hiking. Off-trail use is not allowed without prior approval.

Bicycles are allowed on the roadways and parking areas only.

Fishing Cast a line into one of our fishing ponds! All Illinois Department of Natural Resources fishing regulations apply. Please carry your fishing license.

Parking Use authorized parking areas only.

Alcohol may not be consumed within 100 feet of a parking area.

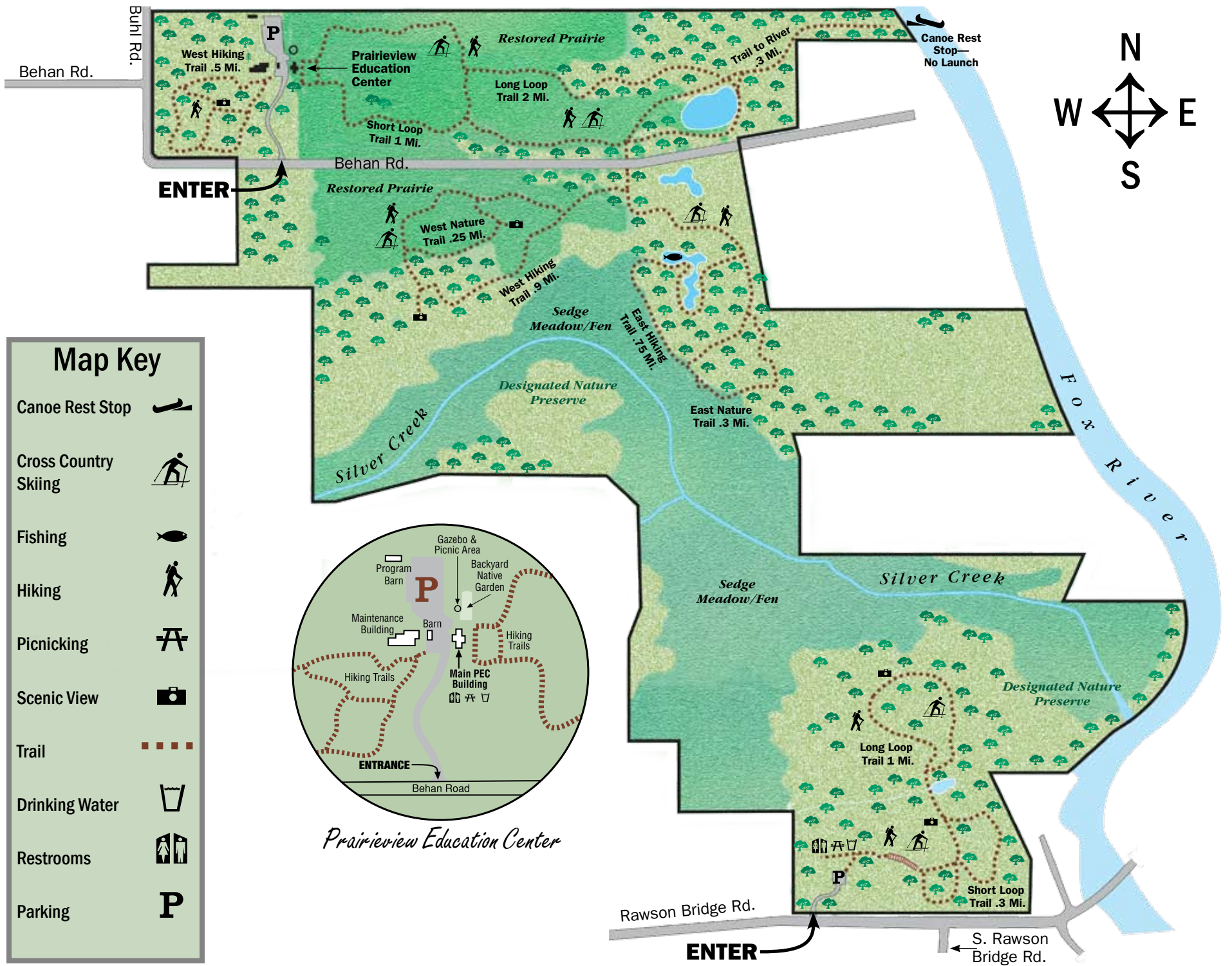
Amplified music is not allowed at any District site.

Littering and burning of litter are prohibited.

Pets are welcome, but must be leashed at all times.

For a complete listing of rules, refer to the main display case on-site or call 815-338-6223.

Silver Creek Conservation Area



Natural Communities

Prairieview Education Center and Silver Creek Conservation Area are comprised of several natural communities, including wetlands, prairie, and savannas. **Wetlands** are areas that are saturated by surface or ground water and have the ability to support aquatic or "water loving" plants. Wetlands provide habitat for more species of plants and animals than any other type of landscape. **Prairies** are a type of grassland where trees are absent or widely scattered. **Savannas** are wooded areas with scattered trees and a grassy understory, and are typically transitional communities found between forests and grasslands.

Native Plants



Marsh Marigold



Pale Purple Coneflower



Butterfly Weed

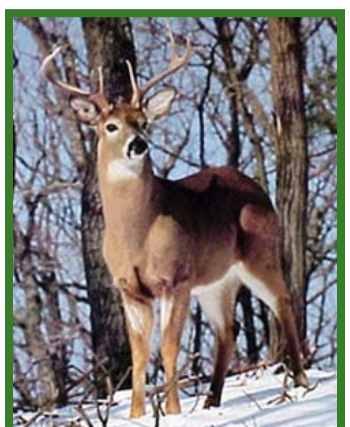


Prairie Smoke



Compass Plant

Native Animals



White Tailed Deer



Great Horned Owl



Red Winged Blackbird



13-Lined Ground Squirrel



Red Fox