

2. Air Station Prairie (Map E)

Site number: E-3

Overall size: 36.42 acres

Ownership: Village of Glenview

Subwatershed: West Fork of North Branch of Chicago River

Mapped Land Cover on Site:

Prairie (29.64 acres): Mesic and wet-mesic prairie.

Wet Prairie /Sedge Meadow (1.61 acre): Sedge meadow and restored wet prairie.

Emergent/Marsh (5.17 acres): Two marsh complexes on southern end of site.



Air Station Prairie looking south toward marsh and interpretive center.

Existing Ecological Conditions: Air Station Prairie contains beautiful high quality remnant and restored native plant communities. Most of the site is a mesic to wet-mesic prairie and contains over 160 plant species, including two Illinois state-endangered species. It is locally zoned as an Environmentally Significant Area (ESA). This prairie is dominated by native grasses and forbs such as big bluestem, little bluestem, switch grass, prairie cord grass, spiderwort, stiff goldenrod, several *Silphium* species, mountain mint, blazing star, wild bergamot, and yellow coneflower. Two marsh areas are located at the south end of the site and another small one near the middle of the site. These wetlands contain cattails, sedges, rushes, spike rushes, and water plantain, along with purple loosestrife. Purple loosestrife is a non-native invasive wetland species. A European beetle (*Galerucella*) is being used as a biological control of this plant. Gray dogwood and sandbar willow are found throughout the site on the edge of the marshes and in wetter areas of the prairie. A small sedge meadow dominated by tussock sedge and prairie cord grass is found near the middle of the site adjacent to the small marsh. Water drains from this sedge meadow and cattail marsh into a newly restored wetland area on the east side of the site. This recently restored wetland area appears to act as a retention area by holding and treating water prior to it exiting the site to the east.



Air Station Prairie looking north.



Recently restored wetland basin on east side of Air Station Prairie.

Restoration and Management Recommendations: A portion of the site was burned this past spring. Regular prescribed burning (*i.e.* every 2-3 years) is a very important management tool for the prairie. Fire will not only maintain and benefit the native species, it will also help control the spread of aggressive native shrubs (*e.g.* gray dogwood). Continued control of the purple loosestrife through the use of the beetles and, if necessary, herbicide is also important. The endangered species populations should be monitored and the Village should enforce the ESA zoning ordinance. This site and the interpretive center are tremendous outdoor education resources for the Village and should continue to be maintained.