

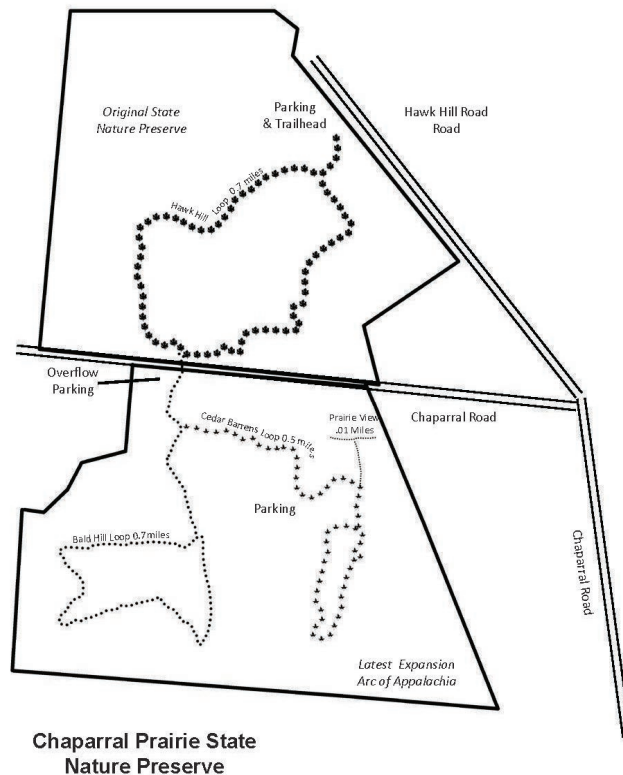


VISITING & HIKING

Chaparral Prairie is managed by the
Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserve

The Arc of Appalachia's operations are 100% supported by private donations. If you love what we do, [please support us](#), so that our wildlands preservation work and trail stewardship can continue.

The Arc of Appalachia, with the help of Clean Ohio funding, expanded the State Nature Preserve with a 60-acre purchase in 2015, bringing the total preserve size to 130 acres. Although the Arc still owns the 60 acres, the State manages it as an extension of Chaparral State Nature Preserve.



Chaparral Prairie State
Nature Preserve



Dogs are not permitted aChaparral Prairie. Please see [Hiking Arc Preserves](#) for dog-friendly trails.

Hiking Trails. Chaparral Prairie offers three loop hiking trails and one spur trail, together totaling 1.6 miles: **Hawk Hill Trail 0.7 mile loop**, the **Cedar Barrens Trail 0.5 mile loop**, the **Bald Hill 0.7 mile loop**, and the **Prairie View 0.1 mile loop** off of the **Cedar Barrens Trail**. A beautifully constructed new footbridge fording the small creek at the entrance to the Cedar Barrens Loop was built by the Ohio Division of Natural Areas and funded by the Cincinnati Wildflower Preservation Society. For more visitor information, please visit the Division's [website](#).

For deeper information, we highly recommend the informative blogs developed by Footpathsblog that dig deeply into the preserve's natural history and include excellent photos: [2021 visit](#), [2022 visit](#), [2023 visit](#).

When to Visit. The highest variety of prairie flowers can be seen during the first three weeks of August. To catch Chaparral Prairie's signature floral showcase, however, plan your visit in the very first days of August to witness the outstanding seasonal spectacle of dense blazing stars (*Liatris spicata*) in bloom. We suggest bringing a pair of closer-focusing binoculars and a butterfly guide.

You are Entering a Highly Protected Nature Preserve. Regulations exist to protect natural communities from the impact of public visitors. By following them, you can leave Chaparral Prairie as beautiful as you found it. Remain on trails at all times, walking in single file to protect bulbs of native wildflowers bordering the trail. Do not disturb, pick or collect flowers, plants, rocks, or wildlife. Hunting, caving, fishing, trail biking, rock climbing, wading, campfires, and swimming are prohibited.

Directions: 209 Hawk Hill Rd, West Union, OH 45693

From West Union, Ohio, the county seat of Adams County, turn north on State Route 247 North. (If coming south on SR 42, the turnoff will be past the courthouse.) 7/10 of a mile later, turn left off SR 247 onto Chaparral Road. 2.8 miles later Chaparral Road makes a 90 degree turn. Keep straight, which will put you on Hawk Hill Road. Chaparral Prairie State Nature Preserve will soon be on your left and is well marked. If you see Cave Hill Road on your left, you have gone too far.

Interpretive Kiosk: An interpretive kiosk is located at the trailhead. We encourage you to take a picture of the trail map with your phone before heading out on the trails.

Chaparral Prairie hiking trails are open from sunrise to sunset.

Natural History. Chaparral Prairie is mostly an Eastern short-grass prairie, boasting a high proportion of wildflowers to grasses, which contributes to its showy floral displays. A few tall grasses are scattered through the prairie, most of which are either Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) or big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardi*), grasses so tall once they fruit they tower over a person's head. Prairies are usually either outcompeted by woodlands or they have been plowed under and planted in fescue for grazing. The few prairie remnants that have survived these perils shelter many rare plants that can be found in no other habitat. Chaparral Prairie boasts an impressive number of 22 state-listed endangered plants..

The preserve's woodlands show the region's prairie influence in that they not only contain white oaks and black oaks, which are common trees in Ohio, but they also have stately specimens of post oak (*Quercus stellata*) – an oak adapted to dry, poor soils that is often found on the woodland fringes of prairies.

The Arc's addition to Chaparral Prairie has responded to the Division's management techniques with vigor. Today the 60-acre addition boasts the showiest populations of dense blazingstar, to be found anywhere in the state. When it is in peak bloom, the meadows are filled with bright purple-violet wands of flowers waving in the wind.

Preserve History. When Chaparral Prairie was designated a state nature preserve in 1985, it was the first preserve ever acquired with state tax check-off funds. Prior to its purchase, the land had been developed as a farm and planted with non-native fescue and sweet clover. Staff with the Division restored the native prairie plant community through routine burns that activate the native prairie seed bed lying dormant in the soils. They laboriously removed hundreds of red cedars and white pines as well as non-native invasive species. Today Chaparral is a blooming success story. One of its signature prairie plants, rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*), has an estimated preserve population of 10,000 plants. Its charismatic globe-like flowers attract swarms of small pollinators and are extremely photogenic.