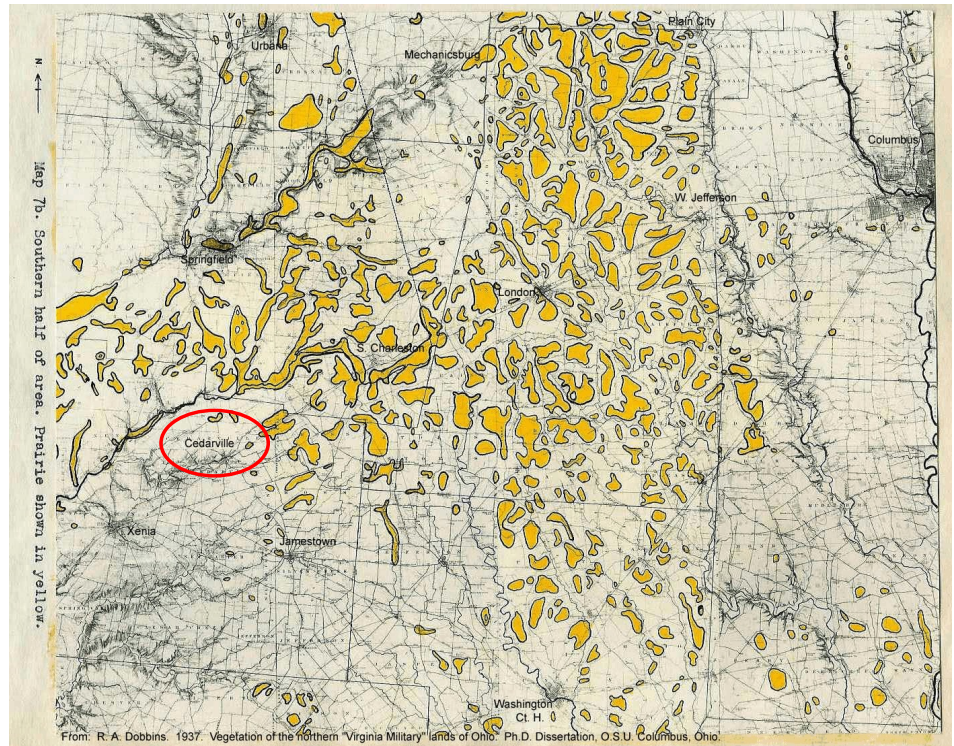


## Prairie Restoration Fact Sheet

### Prairie History:

Open grassland, or prairie, communities were once common in our area (see Cedarville inside red circle).

One theory suggests that, following the ice age, a long period of drier conditions prevailed in what is now the Upper Midwest. This climate allowed prairie communities to extend eastward from the plains to create a mosaic of open prairie with forest. The “prairie islands” mapped as shown here (right) are remnants of this dry post-glacial period.



Today these island remnants have largely been converted to agricultural and urban land uses, with the names such as “Madison Plains”, “Darby Plains”, and “Selma Plains” to mark their existence. The Wright Brothers chose an extensive prairie community on which to test their airplane, and today, this “fair field” houses Wright Patterson Air Force Base, with only the Huffman Prairie (left) as a memorial to the Wrights and to the glory of the Ohio prairies

Fortunately, the Cedarville area was traversed by a railroad which provided a fairly safe and suitable habitat for prairie plant species to survive against the impact of surrounding agriculture. The harsh conditions of the railroad grade combined with frequent fires favored the dry-adapted prairie plants against the encroachment of shrubs and trees. Photo at right was taken prior to the construction of the Prairie Grass Trail in Madison County.





## Prairie Restoration:

Currently, there are several efforts such as that of the Friends of Madison County Parks and Trails (photo right) to preserve and enhance prairie remnant communities in our area. This involves the use of cutting and burning to remove encroaching shrubs and trees.

On the Cedarville University campus, faculty, maintenance staff, students, and the Cedarville Twp. Fire Department, are seeking to restore a former agricultural field and university well field to a prairie community.



## Why Do Prairie Restoration?

There are several reasons why prairie restoration is a worthwhile endeavor:

1. **Historical Benefit** – as noted above, prairies are a part of Ohio history, and also a part of the long-term history of the Earth which creationists believe had been inundated by water, then affected by a subsequent glacial ice age, followed by a possible dry period in which prairies would have prospered in our area.
2. **Scientific and Educational Benefit** – studying prairie ecology may give clues not only to the nature of the long-term changes in global climate, but also to the nature of ecosystems and biotic communities. As we seek to “build a prairie community” we are challenged to realize that communities are not just collections of plants and animals. It takes more to “build a prairie” than simply sowing wildflower and grass seeds as is done along our highways. Why is this so? What are the properties of plant and animal populations that enable them to coexist?
3. **Environmental Stewardship Benefits** – the first command of Scripture was for humans to exercise dominion as representatives of God on Earth (Genesis 1: 26-28) and to “keep (or serve) and preserve the garden” (Genesis 2:15). Restoration of land to a diverse prairie community provides habitat not only for prairie plants but for animals (butterflies, songbirds, hawks, and less charismatic species that are also valuable to the Creator and to our well being on Earth. The establishment of prairie grassland on part of the Cedarville University well field aids in a practical way to increase rainwater infiltration into the groundwater reserves so necessary for our water supply.

We trust that your life and contemplations will be enriched as you consider and enjoy the bikeway prairie remnants and our Cedarville University Prairie Restoration Site and its role in our history, in our educational endeavors, and in our stewardship of resources of Earth.

