



# Olson Nature Preserve

*Mission: Maintaining and restoring Nebraska Ecosystems - creating opportunities for education, research, stewardship and community development.*



Prairie Plains Resource Institute was founded in Aurora, Nebraska, in 1980 with the intent of preserving small eastern Nebraska tallgrass prairie remnants for use as educational sites for science, history and land management.

A non-profit membership organization, Prairie Plains has seven properties that are actively managed to provide access to the Great Plains landscape to people of all ages.

Learn more and become a member at  
[www.prairieplains.org](http://www.prairieplains.org)

Prairie Plains Resource Institute  
1307 L Street  
Aurora, Nebraska 68818  
402-694-5535  
ppri@hamilton.net

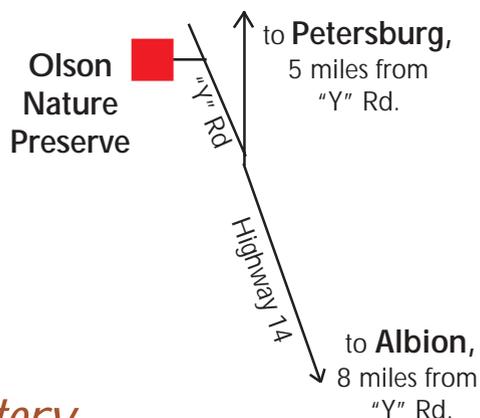


Located 8 miles north of Albion, NE on Hwy 14,  
left on Y Road one mile to entrance gate.

One of seven Nebraska Prairies made available by:



The Olson Nature Preserve (ONP) is truly a unique little corner of the world! Tucked into an area of approximately 112 acres, several interesting ecosystems invite further exploration. Located at the eastern edge of the Nebraska sandhills, characteristic blowouts and gullies comprise the western edge of the preserve. A bur oak grove, clinging to the steep slope, borders the eastern edge of the sandhills. A person may observe typical prairie plants on the hot, dry sandhills, and walk just 100 meters or so to view ferns growing in the moist, cool forest. Wetlands, which fill the area at the base of the oak grove, abound with typical wetland plants and animals.



## History

In 1992 a group of local citizens approached the heirs of the Grant and Berenice Olson estate to request that an ecologically diverse portion of their 1,200 acre ranch be set aside for public use. Norm Smith of Albion directed an extensive feasibility study of the area to substantiate the need for this unique outdoor classroom. The heirs unanimously agreed to the arrangement and in 1995 Prairie Plains Resource Institute took ownership of the 77-acre tract and worked out an agreement to lease an additional 35 acres from Niewohner Farms. Since that time the Preserve has become a hub of activity for area schools, scouts and countless other groups.

## Unique Features

ONP lies at the easternmost tip of the sandhills and includes more than a half-mile stretch of Beaver Creek, a perennial spring-fed stream that forms the geological boundary between the sandhills and the rolling loess hardlands to the east. Besides Beaver Creek, ONP's natural assets include a cottonwood grove, wetlands, lowland and sandhills prairie, oak forest covering and extensive east-facing escarpment and a sandy blowout and canyon area.

## Stewardship

The ONP Land Stewards are educators and community members who take responsibility for overseeing the Preserve with the advice and leadership of Prairie Plains Resource Institute, ensuring that the outdoor classroom is serving its purpose.

Prescribed burning has been conducted on a regular basis, and many Scout projects, including cedar removal, trail design and bench and shelter construction have improved the condition and usability of the preserve. Grazing has also been used on occasion as a management tool.

## Rules

- \* Access is free and open to the public.
- \* The preserve is a drug-free zone.
- \* Hunting and fishing are not allowed.
- \* The bridge is for pedestrian use only.
- \* Toilet facility on site in summer.
- \* No potable water on site.
- \* No fires are allowed on the site.
- \* No artifacts may be removed from the property.
- \* Users should have plans for emergency communication. Cell phones may not work everywhere!