

PRAIRIE

In the spring of 1989, planting began on the Prairie restoration. The grasses and forbes found in this prairie were chosen from those native to our region of Illinois. A one-third mile path winds through the prairie with a tree shaded bench in the center that offers the hiker a place to sit and enjoy the view. The Prairie offers a continually changing display of native plants. Spring, with the start of new sprouts, summer, when the flowers are in bloom, and fall, when the grasses, Big Blue Stem and Indian, grow to heights of 6’ and more. It also provides food and shelter to a variety of wildlife, such as rabbits, quail and red fox. The Restored Prairie is located on eight acres of land to the northwest of the Centralia Cultural Society, along East Rexford.



CENTRALIA FOUNDATION PARK SYSTEM

HIKING TRAILS

Several miles of hiking trails meander through the wooded regions. These areas are purposely left in their natural rustic state to encourage a variety of plants and wildlife native to this region. The trails can be accessed at several spots throughout the park. It’s possible to enter at the Prairie on the parks west side and hike your way across to the Wetlands on the East. Park brochures with the trails marked are available at various places in the park, or at the Park Superintendent’s Home.

CHAPEL IN THE WOODS

A path leading into the woods directly across the road from the Miner’s Memorial Shelter is entrance to the outdoor Chapel in the Woods. This picturesque clearing complete with log benches surrounded by a canopy of trees is an ideal spot for informal weddings, troop meetings of other outdoor services.

WETLANDS

One of the newest editions to the Park is the Wetlands project. Located on a parcel of land the Foundation purchased, that connects with the park, and Sprehe Fields, this new area is accessible off Country Club Road. Restoring another natural environment into the parks domain seemed like a beneficial venture. In the summer of 2002, excavation work began on 2 shallow wetland pools. These pools, not meant for stock fish, are an intricate part of this unique eco-system. A drainage gate has been designed into them to help maintain the water at proper levels. In addition to the grasses and forbes, this area has been heavily planted with trees and shrubs befitting the territory.

WINTER ACTIVITIES

The Parks System offers year-round seasonal beauty. Winter months when the park roads are closed, many enjoy the quiet serenity the park has to offer. On Pleasant Avenue across the street from St. Mary’s Hospital is a man-made skating pond. This unique area is a mowable field in the summer with a drain that can be closed off and flooded in the late fall. When the temperatures allow, one can enjoy safe skating on the outdoor rink due to the fact that the water is only 12-18 inches deep. The sloping hillside located near the park superintendent’s home in Robnett Park, commonly known as “Stover’s Hill”, remains a favorite sledding spot for people of all ages.

