



The Ecology and Management of Prairies in the Central United States (Bur Oak Book)

Chris Helzer

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Most prairies exist today as fragmented landscapes, making thoughtful and vigilant management ever more important. Intended for landowners and managers dedicated to understanding and nurturing their prairies as well as farmers, ranchers, conservationists, and all those with a strong interest in grasslands, ecologist Chris Helzer's readable and practical manual educates prairie owners and managers about grassland ecology and gives them guidelines for keeping prairies diverse, vigorous, and viable.

Chapters in the first section, "Prairie Ecology," describe prairie plants and the communities they live in, the ways in which disturbance modifies plant communities, the animal and plant inhabitants that are key to prairie survival, and the importance of diversity within plant and animal communities. Chapters in the second section, "Prairie Management," explore the adaptive management process as well as guiding principles for designing management strategies, examples of successful management systems such as fire and grazing, guidance for dealing with birds and other species that have particular habitat requirements and with the invasive species that have become the most serious threat that prairie managers have to deal with, and general techniques for prairie restoration. Following the conclusion and a forward-thinking note on climate change, eight appendixes provide more information on grazing, prescribed fire, and invasive species as well as bibliographic notes, references, and national and state organizations with expertise in prairie management.

Grasslands can be found throughout much of North America, and the ideas and strategies in this book apply to most of them, particularly tallgrass and mixed-grass prairies in eastern North Dakota, eastern South Dakota, eastern Nebraska, eastern Kansas, eastern Oklahoma, northwestern Missouri, northern Illinois, northwestern Indiana, Iowa, southwestern Wisconsin, and southwestern Minnesota. By presenting all the factors that promote biological diversity and thus enhance prairie communities, then incorporating these factors into a set of clear-sighted management practices, *The Ecology and Management of Prairies in the Central United States* presents the tools necessary to ensure that grasslands are managed in the purposeful ways essential to the continued health and survival of prairie communities.

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