

# The Robb Prairie

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## General Description

The Robb Prairie is a 5.5 acre (2.2 ha) grassland conveniently located to the Pittsburg State University campus along US-69. A small parking area on public land is located just to the north of the property across the county road.

The land is a low prairie in the Cow Creek floodplain. Water stands in the eastern half in the early spring and, after heavy rainfall, its heavy McCune silt loam and clay pan allows water to percolate very slowly. During a flood in 1986 (lower right), the entire prairie was underwater, the eastern portion to a depth of nearly 6 feet.

Dominant vegetation includes Big bluestem, Indiangrass, Switchgrass, various sedges, False dragonhead, and Blazing star.

## Acquisition

The land was donated to the University in 1986 by the heirs of the late Ernest Robb. Mr. Robb had recognized the natural value of the site and, while grazing and haying the land, he never plowed it.

## Usage

The primary use of the site has been for field trips for non-major biology classes during units on ecology, but it has also been used for Mammalogy and Field Ecology.

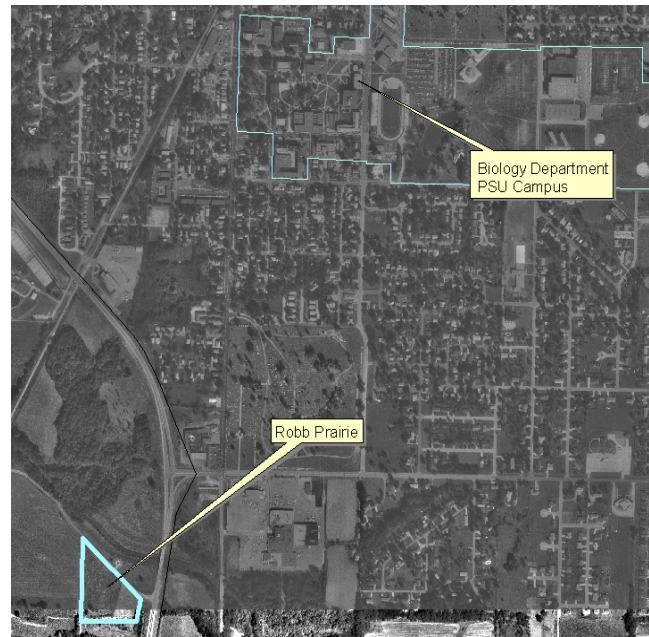
The site is open to the public, but its use as a local natural area has never been exploited as such.

## Management

The wet nature of the site makes prairie management a challenge. Spring burning occurs when possible and haying is an alternative management technique. Invasive green ash in the low east side is a continuing problem as this "prairie" seems to want to be a woodland. An education kiosk and walking trail had been maintained in the past but was discontinued. A fence along all but the south borders was removed to make burning easier.

## Publications

1992. Ford, Steven. Robb Prairie. pp. 7-8 in: J. Arruda (ed), Kansas Academy of Science Multidisciplinary Guidebook 6. Fall Field Trip to the Natural Areas of Southeast Kansas. Kansas Geological Survey Open-File Report 92-22. 91 pp.





Robb Prairie next to US-69 south. Pittsburg mall to the right (east).



Robb Prairie after mowing (Nov. 2015). Looking west from HW-69.