

Come Explore

THE MAPLEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVES

A place for discovery



MAPLEWOOD



WELCOME TO THE MAPLEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVES!

These special places preserve a bit of the wild throughout our city. Sanctuaries from the hustle and bustle of urban life, they are here for plants, for animals, and for people.

Discover and enjoy! Fourteen Neighborhood Preserves totaling more than 300 acres await you. Come hike the rolling hills. Stroll the shadows of a fern glade. Listen to a chorus of frogs in the wetland.

Unleash your curiosity. Connect with nature.



How the Preserves Came to Be

In the late 1980s, Maplewood citizens alarmed by the fast pace of development came together to save some of the City's remaining open space. After weeks of study and discussion, they asked the City Council to hold a referendum. In 1993, Maplewood voters were the first in the region to pass a referendum to preserve open space. Five million dollars was set aside to acquire land.



ONCE UPON A TIME

If you ventured through Maplewood 200 years ago, what would you have seen? Woodlands, oak savannas, and wetlands. Elk, foxes, wolves, and waterfowl. Perhaps a summer Indian village on the shores of Spoon Lake. If you could travel back another 12,000 years, you'd stand at the edge of a retreating glacier—in a landscape without plants.

The land changes continually. But, if you search hard enough you can still catch glimpses of the pre-settlement landscape—Maplewood's natural communities.

Celebrating Maplewood's Natural Heritage



FORESTS

Maplewood historically had oak forests and maple-basswood forests. The forest's canopy of tall trees and understory of shrubs and saplings shades a carpet of ferns and wildflowers.

Illustration by Andy Peterson for the City of Maplewood



SAVANNAS

Scattered oaks with a groundcover of prairie grasses and wildflowers are the building blocks of an oak savanna. Growing in the open sun, the old oaks are majestic specimens with sprawling limbs.



PRAIRIES

Within a patchwork of woods and savannas, Maplewood had small pockets of prairie. Dramatic tall grasses and flowers of all colors bloom from spring through fall.



WETLANDS

The retreating glaciers carved out wetlands, ponds, lakes, and streams. Home to a wealth of plants and animals, wetlands are also valued for their capacity to store and filter stormwater.

NATURE NEEDS A HELPING HAND

Urban nature preserves are not wilderness areas. They are relatively small, and have been too drastically altered to function as fully-intact ecological systems. Natural processes have been so disrupted at the preserves that they need a little help to recover. Consider some of the changes people have brought to the landscape:

- introduced invasive plants
- added pollutants
- removed natural forces such as fire and grazing
- development patterns created small isolated natural areas, limiting genetic exchange
- altered courses of wetlands and streams

It's not enough to set aside land—we have to take care of it as well.

Caring for the Preserves

Maplewood is committed to taking care of its natural areas. At the Neighborhood Preserves, we do this by restoring the oak woodlands, savannas, wetlands, and prairies that once thrived here. After initial restoration work, ongoing management will ensure that the preserves remain treasures for future generations.

Why Are We Restoring Native Plant Communities?

Legacy—Few people in Maplewood have experienced an oak woodland, oak savanna, or wet prairie. Yet these are the signature landscapes of our region. Restoring the preserves provides examples of long-lost landscapes for all to learn from and enjoy.



Adaptation—Maplewood's native plant and animals evolved here and are adapted to our climate and soils. Once restored, the preserves will require less maintenance than other types of parklands.

Diversity—Restoring native plant communities helps maintain a diversity of plants and animals. Diverse ecosystems are better able to survive catastrophic events and climate change.



Habitat for Animals—Native plant communities provide nesting, shelter, cover, and food for animals.

Beauty—Viewed closely or from afar, our native landscapes offer beauty and interest year-round.



Restoration and Management Scrapbook

Creating a Master Plan



The first step in caring for the preserves is to understand the unique ecology of each site. An ecologist conducts a site analysis and prepares a master plan. Public meetings provide a forum for neighbors' input.

Help from a Beetle



At the Priory and other preserves, naturalists release loosestrife beetles to help control purple loosestrife. These beetles are specialists that feed only on purple loosestrife. They eat enough to decrease this invasive species to tolerable levels.

Enhancing an Oak Woodland



At the Priory Preserve, buckthorn invaded the oak woodland and crowded out native shrubs and wildflowers. An ambitious crew of contractors and volunteers removed buckthorn. Many wildflowers bloom at the preserve, but native shrubs must be planted.

Monitoring Jim's Prairie



Monitoring reed canary grass at Jim's Prairie helps us evaluate how successfully we're controlling this invasive species.

Managing Weeds



Invasive plants (WEEDS!) have invaded most Maplewood natural areas. Species such as buckthorn and purple loosestrife crowd the native species and degrade habitat for wildlife. The many methods used to control invasive plants include pulling, cutting, poisoning, and biological controls.

Prairie Farm Planting



The restoration plan for Prairie Farm called for a "start from scratch" approach where herbicide was used to kill existing vegetation before planting the prairie grasses and wildflowers. Weather patterns and weeds have slowed this prairie's establishment. Patience is an important aspect of restoration.

Prescribed Burns



Prairies, savannas, and oak woodlands evolved with wild fires and depend on them. Experienced contractors have brought fire back to the preserves by conducting periodic prescribed burns, which enhance our woodlands and grasslands.

Managing Wildlife



Overabundance of deer has been devastating to wildflowers, shrubs, and young trees at some preserves. Partners, such as Ramsey County Parks and the Metro Bowhunters Resource Base, help Maplewood manage deer populations.

THE MAPLEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVES



Maplewood Nature Center
Home Base for the Neighborhood Preserves

Come Explore

1. Joy Park

NW Corner Century Avenue and Joy Road
39 acres plus 21-acre park, footpaths, parking lot

2. Prairie Farm

County Road D, between Ariel Street and McKnight Road
22 acres plus 2-acre Bruentrup Historical Farm, short section of blacktop trail, parking lot

3. Kohlman Creek

SW Corner Hazelwood Street and Beam Avenue
10 acres, short section of blacktop trail, street parking

4. Fisher's Corner

NW corner Hwy 61 and County Road C
18 acres, no trails, park-and-ride lot

5. Hidden Marsh

Near 2870 Arcade Street
6 acres, no trails, no parking

6. Spoon Lake

Across from Spoon Lake, N of Keller Parkway
39 acres, unimproved footpaths, parking lot at Spoon Lake

7. Trout Brook

At Harumbe School, County Road B, east of Rice Street
7 acres, mowed trail, parking lot. City has management easement, but doesn't own site. Closed to public during school hours (year-round school).

8. Gladstone Savanna

SW corner Frost Avenue and English Street
23 acres, unimproved footpaths, street parking

9. Priory

SW corner Larpenteur Avenue and Century Avenue
46 acres, mowed trails, boardwalks, street parking

10. Jim's Prairie

Call Maplewood Nature Center for directions and orientation
5 acres, no trails, parking lot

11. Beaver Creek

South of Maryland Avenue, between Lakewood Drive and Sterling Street
9 acres, blacktop trail

12. Maplewood Nature Center

2659 East 7th Street
40 acres, visitor center, limerock trails, parking lot, restrooms
Maplewood Nature Center is home base for the Neighborhood Preserves. Here you can explore the Visitor Center, trails and pond, talk to a naturalist, or attend a program. The Nature Center's mission is "to enhance awareness and understanding of land, water, and wildlife resources; to empower the community to become stewards of the environment."

13. Applewood

East of Sterling Street, N of Schaller Drive
30 acres, park on O'Day Street, park with playground, mowed trails

14. Carver

SW corner Schadt Drive and Sterling Street
27 acres, no trails, street parking

See website for descriptions of each preserve and updated information on trails:
[www.ci.maplewood.mn.us/Maplewood Nature Center](http://www.ci.maplewood.mn.us/MaplewoodNatureCenter)



HELP US TAKE CARE OF THE PRESERVES!

Volunteers and partners assist the preserves' restoration journey, including:

- the Open Space Technical Advisory Committee, which provides natural resources expertise
- Volunteer Monitors, who visit preserves monthly to report on what's happening
- Volunteer Stewards, who do the hard physical work of maintaining trails, removing invasive species, and planting native plants

Call the Maplewood Nature Center to become a volunteer today.



"Cloudy, low 60s, very autumn-like—red anemone, goldenrod, black-eyed Susan, lots of apples on ground, pears picked, lots of mushrooms—flicker, bluejays, cardinal, four deer, bucks on pond tree down on southern path across trail—just one piece of litter."

—Report from volunteer monitor R. Baatz



PLEASE HELP PROTECT THESE SPECIAL PLACES

To keep the preserves as natural as possible, most trails are soil or mowed grass. A few sites have sections of paved trails. For up-to-date information on trails and facilities, visit the City website or contact Maplewood Nature Center.

VISITING THE PRESERVES

- The preserves are open from dawn to dusk.
- Leave flowers, seeds, plants, and animals in place for all to enjoy.
- Pets must be leashed and all pet feces removed.
- Bicycles are prohibited at most sites.
- No fires, camping, or motorized vehicles.

Reid Evers



MAPLEWOOD

Maplewood Nature Center and Neighborhood Preserves are managed by the City of Maplewood. For more information contact the Nature Center at (651) 249-2170 or at www.ci.maplewood.mn.us/nc.