



### 1 The trail head

starts at the visitor center. Once you reach the top, you will have traveled to a 200 foot rise in elevation.



**2 An over-story of trees** is all around you. They are Burr Oak, Prairie Willow, Hackberry, Wild Plum, and Eastern Red Cedar.



### 3 The stone steps

and the shelter house were built in 1936 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. In 2006, four members of the Youth Conservation Corps replaced the wooden rails and posts with recycled plastic. The trail was also extended across the rest of the bluff making the trail 9/10 of a mile long. Are you getting tired climbing all those steps? There are over 200 of them! Have you noticed that the stairs are jagged rather than sloped like normal stairs? The soil of the Loess Hills is very unique. How you interact with the soil takes a special awareness. The soil of the Loess Hills is silt mixed with sand rather than clay; it's tightly packed, but still very loose. If you were to simply cut into the side creating a slope for stairs, the soil would just wash out so a square cut into the steep earth is required. The jagged silt edges act as concrete keeping it in place.



**4 Elevation:**  
1,150 Feet  
Above Sea  
Level

### 5 A panoramic view of Squaw

Creek National Wildlife Refuge allows one to see that amidst 7,419 acres of man-made marshes here at Squaw Creek, waterfowl and other wildlife can find critically needed food, water and shelter in the spring and in the fall when hundreds of thousands of migratory birds provide a stirring spectacle against the backdrop of the bluffs. The Missouri River Valley has historically been a major migration corridor for birds even though it's believed that due to the channelization of the river and destruction of wetlands, migration has declined.

### 6 Wildflowers

can be seen along the Loess Hills Trail.



**7 The savannah** is a mix of native grasses and wildflowers (Loess Bluff Prairie) that reveals an over story of trees (oak hickory forest) as you transition from a south facing slope to a north facing slope; both of which are extremely steep. The southern slope reveals savannah prairie while the north facing slope reveals the over story of trees. As you continue along the narrow trail at the top, look south and you will see the Loess Hills as they extend towards St. Joseph, Missouri.

### 8 The steep descent

now starts as you make your way downward off the summit of the Loess Hills trail.



### 9 Preserving the Loess Hills

Earlier Native Americans once explored these hills regarding the hilltops as sacred. But, no archeological sites have ever been located. Do you suppose the Indians just journeyed through and hunted even though they left no evidence of their journey's passage? The Oneota, Missouri, Ioway, and Oto Tribes are some of the tribes believed to have traveled through. Some common threads shared by these tribes were they all planted corn, beans, and squash and they were all hunters of bison (buffalo) and elk. Their artifacts (found in other areas) also had some common threads – those found right here in the Loess Hills, such as stone.



### 10 The Callow Trail

is a paved memorial trail that marks the end of the Loess Hill Trail. As you follow the Callow Trail, it will merge with Squaw Creek's parking lot. This part of the trail is flat and easy to walk. This trail was dedicated to James Michael Callow who served as Squaw Creek's Assistant Refuge Manager from 1991 to 1998. He was killed after his aircraft went down in Oregon while conducting waterfowl surveys.

