

Adopt-A-Trail on the Tallgrass Prairie



Are you, your family, group or organization looking for something to do together outdoors during the warmer months? Are you interested in helping to reconstruct a part of Iowa's natural history? Do you want to take part in a valuable community service project? If so, check out the Adopt-A-Trail program at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge!

The goal of the Adopt-A-Trail program is to improve the quality of the prairie plantings along our primary hiking trails for the enjoyment of our visitors and the continued enhancement of the prairie. This is an opportunity for any individual or group, of any ages, to help reconstruct and maintain our native tallgrass prairie. You would become the caretaker for a 50x25 foot plot of reconstructed prairie adjacent to the Overlook Trail. Your responsibilities would include spreading seeds and planting seedlings of native plants in May, watering as necessary, and removing invasive species throughout the growing season (May-September). You must commit to having someone tend your plot at least 3 times per month during these months; you may work any day, anytime from sunrise to sunset.

Training, equipment and plants are all provided by Refuge staff or our many experienced volunteers. We will hold a spring orientation and kick-off to get you up to speed, and staff are always available via email, or in person during business hours, to help or answer questions.

The Adopt-A-Trail program is perfect for families, friends, civic associations, clubs, or other organized groups (church, scout, neighborhood, youth, etc.). Participants can be any age, and don't need any prior knowledge about the prairie. This program is a fun way to get your group together for a meaningful outdoor, community service activity. Everyone need not be present each time – many hands make light work, so divide it up as it fits into everyone's busy summer schedules.

If you would like to find out more about this exciting program, please contact Megan Wandag by phone at 515-994-3400 or by e-mail at megan_wandag@fws.gov. Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge is located just 20 miles east of Des Moines on Hwy 163 near Prairie City.