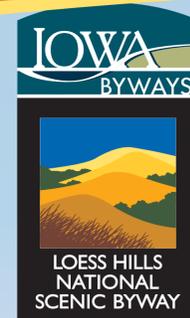


Open and Boundless Prairie

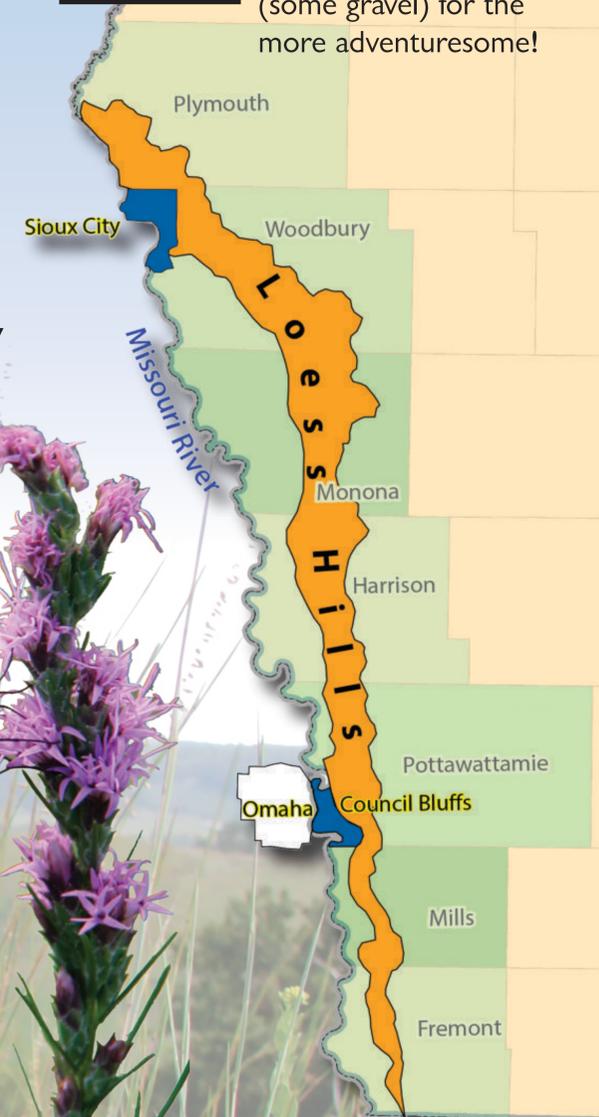
Lewis and Clark in Iowa

On July 18, 1804, Lewis & Clark recorded in their journals that the bluffs you are standing on were “...a ridge of naked hills...running parallel to the river as far as we could see and from three to six miles distance.” They also noted the river bottom area: “...generally divided into prairies with little timber, except on low points, islands, and near creeks, and consisted of cottonwood, mulberry, elm, and sycamore...”

On July 19, the expedition set out early after a breakfast of “Rosted Ribs of Deer and a little coffee.” William Clark went hunting on shore after an elk. “After ascending and passing thro a narrow strip of wood land, came suddenly into an open and bound less Prarie. This prospect So Sudden & entertaining that I forgot the object of my prosute and turned my attention to the Variety which presented themselves to my view...”



The Loess Hills National Scenic Byway™ is a 220 mile paved route through the Loess Hills. The 16 excursion loops make up an additional 185 miles (some gravel) for the more adventuresome!

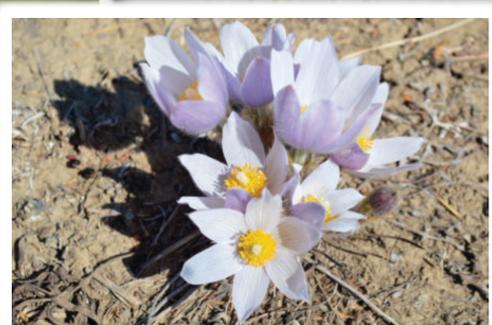


A Calendar of Color

Prairies are a mosaic of plants and animals. Visit from spring to fall to see a changing parade of blooming flowers. Listen for the song of the bobolink or the buzz of pollinating insects.



Fall brings out goldenrods and sunflowers swarming with soldier beetles feeding on insects attracted to the blooms.



Early bloomers, like pasque flowers, hug the warm ground and are protected from frost by hairy stems and leaves.

Sustaining Forces

Wildfires and grazing animals like bison controlled woody plants before settlement. Most of a prairie grass or flower grows below the soil. If burned or grazed, it resprouts quickly. These natural controls no longer exist, so today prairie managers must either cut or burn woody intruders.



Mid-summer flowers are taller to rise above growing grasses in view of pollinating insects, like this black swallowtail on blazing star.



www.iowabyways.org
www.visitloesshills.org

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www.goldenhillsrcd.org

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