

Robert Grau

Robert Grau was a forester and a true conservationist. He was a charter member of the Clayton County Conservation Board from 1958-1978, and he was one of the first to reconstruct a prairie in Clayton County in the late 1970's. The reconstruction of this Oak Savanna is dedicated to his memory.



Robert Grau with his son and grandsons

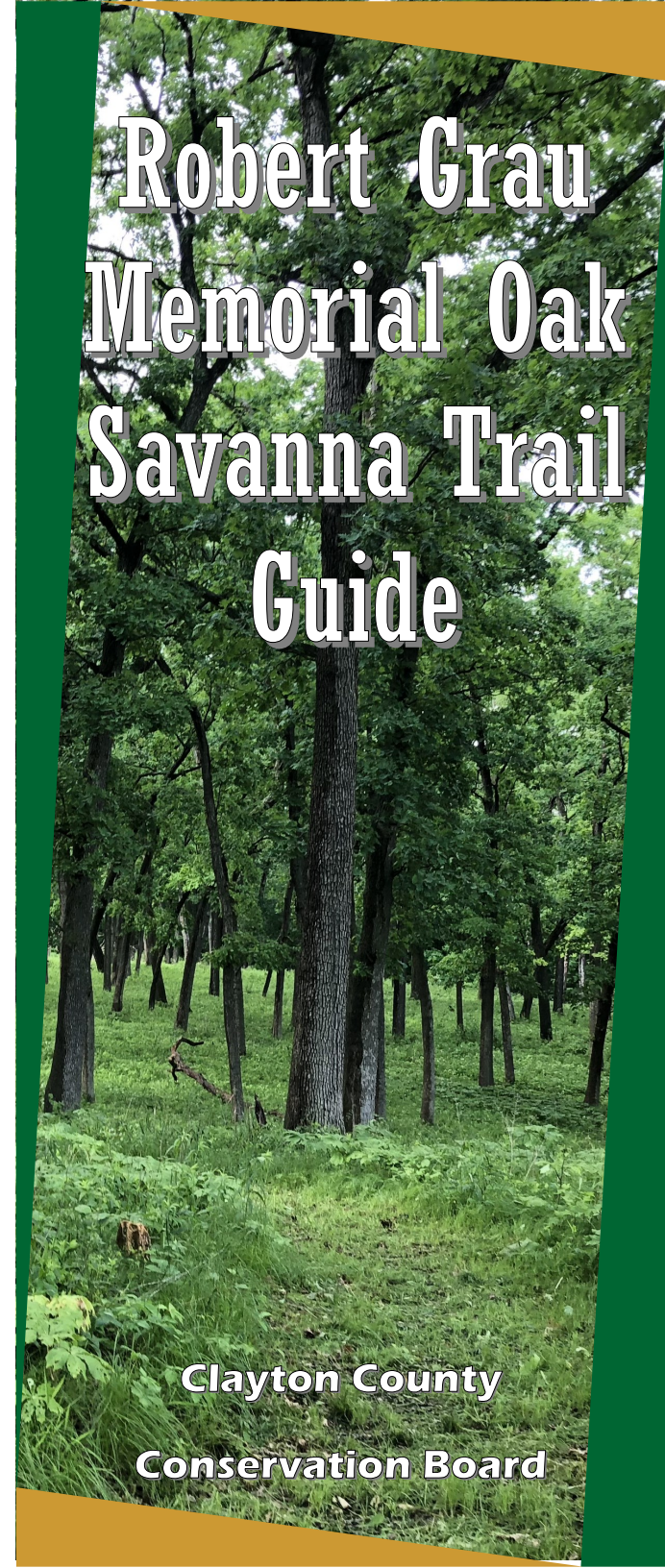


29862 Osborne Road

Elkader, IA 52043

(563)-245-1516

Robert Grau Memorial Oak Savanna Trail Guide



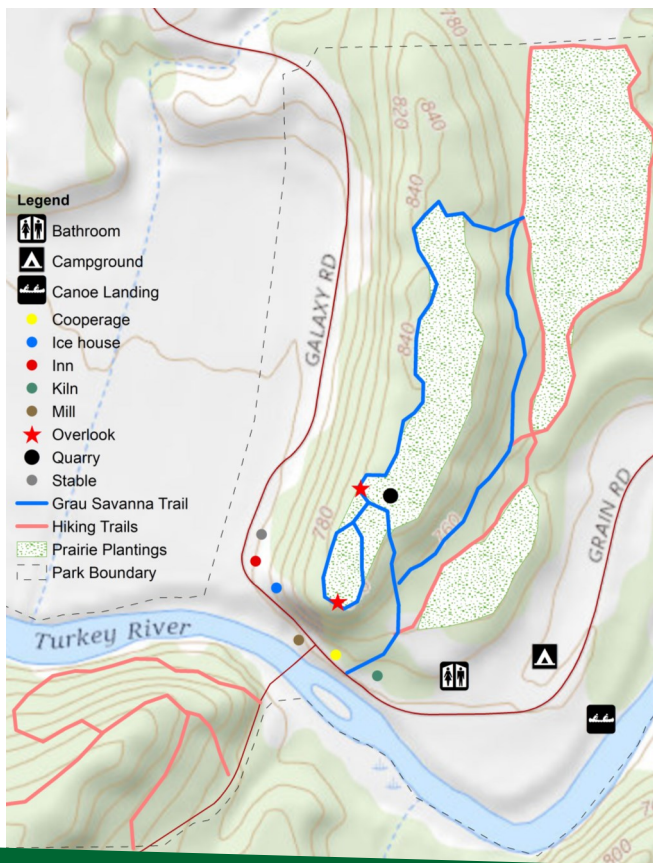
Clayton County
Conservation Board

Welcome!

Welcome to the Robert Grau Memorial Oak Savanna and Trail! Use this brochure to help guide you along the trail. We hope you enjoy your visit!

Limestone Kiln

At the beginning of the trail next to the road, just past the Cooperage, is where a lime kiln was once located. The kiln would have been used during the late 1860's when Motor Mill was being constructed. It was used to create the lime mortar for the building stones and the plaster used on the interior walls of the mill.



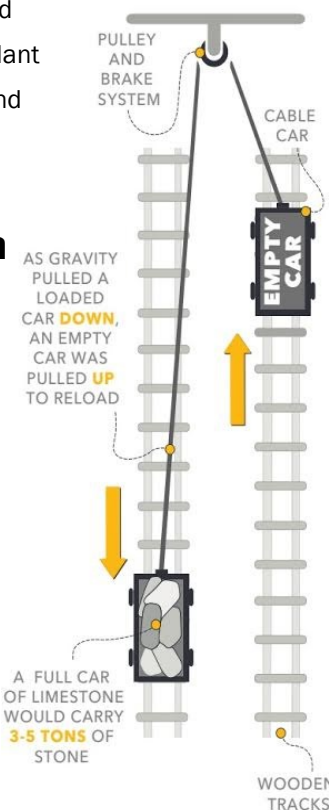
Prairie Reconstruction

As you make your way up the first hill, you'll notice a large open prairie off to the right. Prairie was once common in NE Iowa. The original prairie around the village of Motor was turned into farmland when the Klink family bought Motor Mill and surrounding buildings in 1903. Clayton County Conservation acquired the site in 1983 and has since restored this area to prairie vegetation. Historically fire was an important part of prairie ecology. Fire encouraged native prairie species while discouraging encroachment of trees and brush. Today, occasional controlled burns help restore native plant and animal communities and control invasive species.



Rail Car System

Further up the hill, on the right, there is a furrow along the trail. This is part of what remains of the two-car rail system that hauled limestone from the top of the hill for construction of the mill. As one full car ran downhill, it would pull the second empty car uphill.



Oak Savanna

At the top of the hill, you have a good view of the oak savanna. Savannas are open landscapes of widely spaced, broad-crowned trees and a diverse mix of shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers. Once common in NE Iowa's hills and river valleys, savannas are now rare, due to land use change for farming and building.

Limestone Quarry

Once at the top of the hill, you will notice a large cavity in the ground. This is the quarry from which limestone was taken for construction of Motor Mill. Much of the stone used to build the mill and surrounding buildings came from here.

Overlooks

At this point in the hike, our trail splits two directions. To the left you will get a bird's-eye view of the Historic Motor Mill Site from the overlook. Taking a right will get you a beautiful view of local farmland as well as looking deeper into the wildlife of the savanna.

Native Wildlife

Our savanna has a diversity of plant and animal life. Watch for plants and trees such as Bur Oak, White Oak, Blue-Eyed Grass, Hoary Puccoon and more. Be alert to see and hear animals such as Chipmunks, Owls, Fox, Deer Mice, Turkey, and Pileated Woodpeckers.

