

Independent Study Proposal

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Prairie plant communities were once widespread in the Piedmont region. Recognition of the ecological and conservation value of these communities is growing. For this independent study project, I will create a website – piedmontprairie.us – documenting the natural history and flora of the piedmont prairie habitat. The site will also described ways for people to get involved in piedmont prairie conservation, especially by conserving refugia on roadsides and Rights-of-Way (ROW).

I hope for this project to support the NCBG's mission by serving as resource for people to discover the Piedmont prairie habitat. Also, I intend for the project to a comprehensive online resource and bibliography for Piedmont prairie habitat, which, to my knowledge, does not exist. Lastly, the project will be open-sourced and released under a CC BY-SA 4.0 license, so others may contribute and expand the knowledge base.

The website will incorporate knowledge gained from many NCBG courses. In Plant Communities of North Carolina, for example, I learned of the loss of once widespread grassland communities in the Piedmont. In Principles of Conservation Biology, I learned of multiple challenges and dilemmas in conservation planning, in particular how habitats considered marginal like ROWs can have important conservation value.