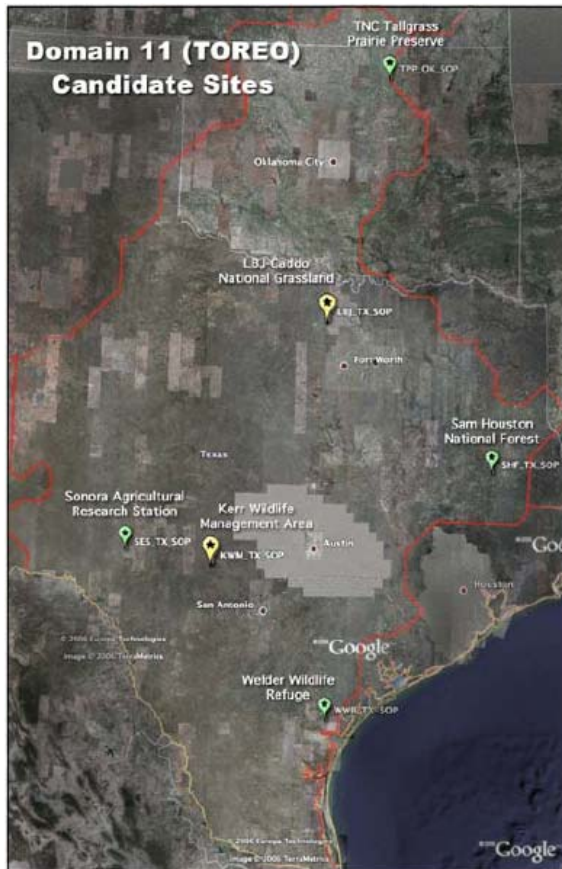


TNC Tallgrass Prairie Preserve (TPP): Southern Plains Domain

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Web page: www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/oklahoma/preserves/tallgrass.html

Location within Domain:



History: The Tallgrass Prairie Preserve has been controlled by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) since 1989. The preserve covers over 12,000 ha of tallgrass prairie, with inclusions of oak savanna and forest, that have not been converted to agriculture because of underlying shallow flint layers within the soil. The area was settled by ranchers who grazed cattle in the area for decades before TNC acquired the land. It is part of the Flint Hills region that extends throughout eastern Kansas. Annual dormant season fires were commonly used by the ranchers to minimize woody plant encroachment. More recently TNC has practiced a highly organized patch burn approach whereby dormant and growing season fires are conducted each year. As part of the approach to maintain and restore the tallgrass prairie ecosystem, over 2500 bison are allowed to roam and graze freely on the preserve.

Key Characteristics: The Tallgrass Prairie Preserve is part of the tallgrass prairie association that originally spanned portions of 14 states. It is representative of high quality tallgrass prairie that was never plowed and has

been constantly burned and grazed. It is surrounded by millions of hectares of similar ecosystems in private ownership. These land owners work closely with TNC to apply advanced management to preserve the prairie and encourage species conservation. TNC encourages on-site research and there are over a dozen active research projects on the preserve ranging from landscape ecology to virus biology.

Existing Infrastructure: The area has an excellent road system that it is maintained by TNC and the county. The University of Tulsa recently completed construction of a large research and meeting facility on the TPP with the cooperation of TNC. The headquarters area has a large physical plant with lodging, research facilities and interpretive centers. Due to the large amount of active research, the TPP has labs, offices and high speed internet. In addition, a tower from the Oklahoma Mesonet is located on site. Mesonet officials have agreed to allow additional instruments added to their towers if there is sufficient power or additional power is brought in to run those instruments, thus considerably reducing costs for tower placement.

Facilities: The facilities are suitable for research, maintenance, outreach, instruction. It is close to Tulsa and Stillwater, Oklahoma and has a large number of researchers already using the facilities.