

Trail Location

The Elizabeth Fries Ellet Interpretive Trail (EFEIT) is located in Eden Prairie's Richard T. Anderson Conservation Area, (RTA) which consists of 125 acres of city owned and preserved, undeveloped land between the Minnesota River and the Settlers Ridge community.

Eden Prairie Parks Information:

952-949-8442

EFEIT Contact:

efeinterpretivetrail@yahoo.com

Interpretive Signs

The EFEIT Interpretive Signs provide visitors with an educational and recreational tool based on the RTA's local biomes and the area's history to include: botany, literature, art, ornithology, and entomology.

The Interpretive Signs and web site www.efeinterpretivetrail.org provide a recreational resource and an educational tool. Proprietary images on the signs come from Minnesota and Eden Prairie Historical Societies and many other national museums and libraries. Much of the scientific information comes from the MN Department of Natural Resources, MN Science Museum and Audubon Minnesota. Bird species were chosen to represent the time in which Ellet visited in 1852.



Broad Winged Hawk
Big Woods Biome

Park Setting

The addition of the Elizabeth Fries Ellet Interpretive Trail to the Richard T. Anderson Conservation Area is a distinctive regional attraction to an already outstanding city-wide park system. The trail's unique historical, botanical and literary presentation accommodate trail excursions from April to October. The Richard T. Anderson is a 125 acre conservation area overlooking the Minnesota River Valley.

Community Identity

Eden Prairie businesses already identify the community with Elizabeth Fries Ellet, the writer who named the city of Eden Prairie more than 150 years ago. Real estate companies, small local businesses and service orientated businesses utilize Ellet's name to define the community's identity in a historical context.

Recreational and Educational Opportunities

The Elizabeth Fries Ellet Interpretive Trail signs include distances and levels of difficulty for visitors. The signs provide families and students a visual guide from the smallest to the largest species flora and fauna. The signs will interact with the web site and allow visitors to gain access at home to additional information about the trail.

Bottomland Forest Biome:

Bottomland hardwood forests are the lowest and wettest of all hardwood forests. They are found along the edges of lakes and rivers. Trees and plants in this biome are flooded periodically when water levels rise. The Bottomland Forest supports many species of plants and animals.

Minnesota River Biome:

The Dakota named the river Minnesota which means "sky-like water." The new territory along the valley and surrounding area was called the Minnesota Territory after the river. The river provided food and a water route for Native Americans, fur traders, and settlers.

Big Woods Biome:

Maple-basswood forests were called the "Big Woods" by early Minnesotans. They have an open or sparsely layered understory with tall straight trees that form a dense canopy. There are perennial spring flowers called ephemerals that bloom before the forest's dense canopy of leaves filters out the sunlight. The floor of the forest is made of leaf litter called "duff" that provides habitat for insects that carry seeds to promote plant growth.

Oak Savanna Biome:

Oak Savannas are a rare transition biome between tall grass prairie and woodland habitats. They contain a diverse plant and animal community that has evolved over time. The Oak Savanna supports butterflies and caterpillars, mostly taken from oaks, which attract birds that migrate in the spring. In the Nineteenth Century, when Ellet visited Minnesota, small ground level shrubs like Hazel and Cornus or Dogwood, were common in Oak Savannas

Prairie Biome:

Prairies are a type of grassland dominated by herbaceous plants with widely scattered trees. When the settlers moved westward from the forests of the eastern United States, they encountered vast oceans of grass. The grasses waved on the surface, so they called the wagons used by the pioneers "prairie schooners." Back then prairies were immense areas, so even if you were elevated on horseback or in a wagon, it was not possible to see across the prairie to the horizon.

Sedge Meadow Biome:

A Sedge Meadow is the most unusual type of wetland habitat, occurring naturally in wet prairies, spring areas, and river flood plains. They are dominated by sedges. The soil in sedge meadow is formed from the decomposition of sedges. There are hundreds of species of sedges in Minnesota

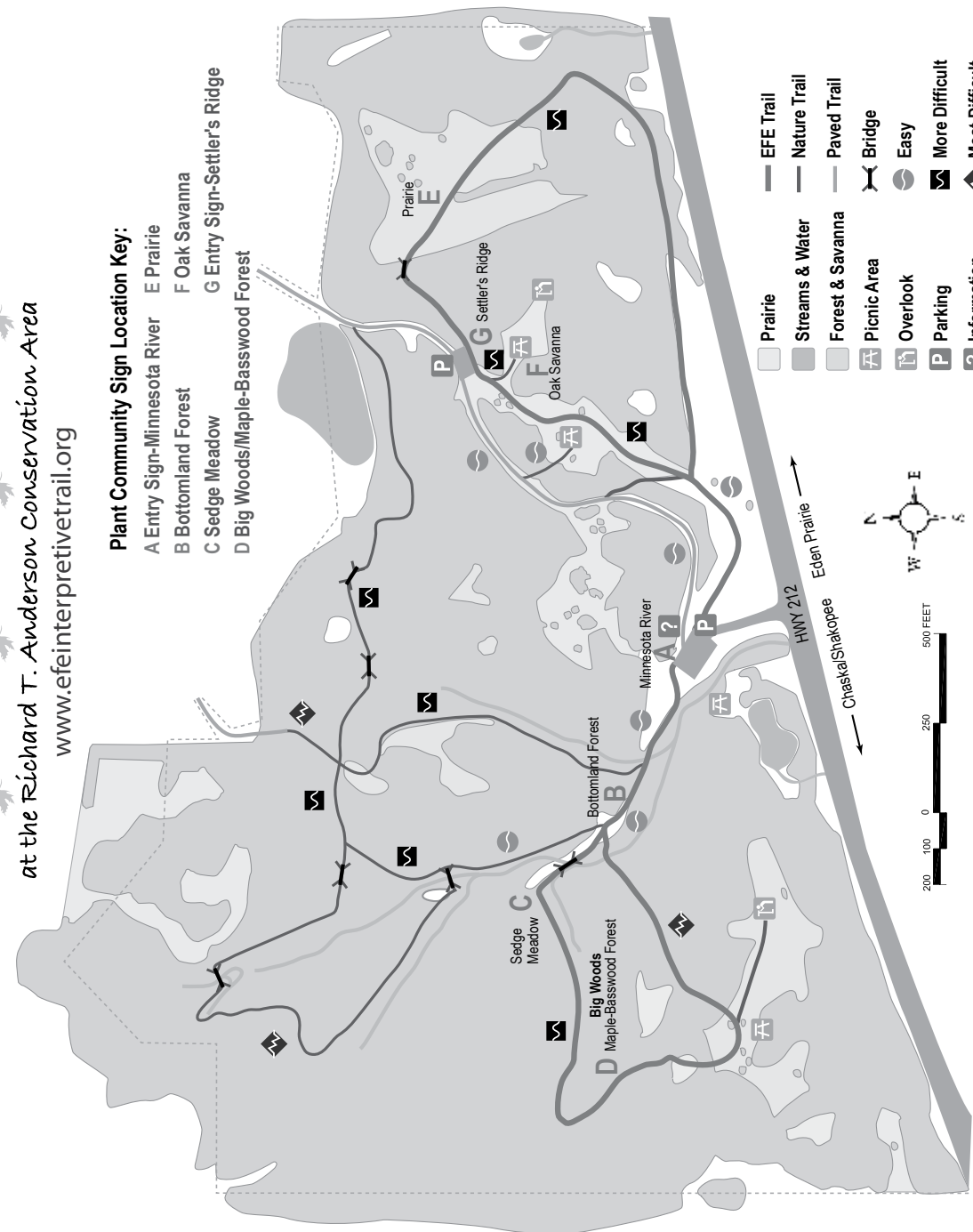
Elizabeth Fries Ellet Interpretive Trail

Elizabeth Fries Ellet Interpretive Trail

at the Richard T. Anderson Conservation Area
www.efeinterpretivetrail.org

Plant Community Sign Location Key:

- A Entry Sign-Minnesota River
- B Bottomland Forest
- C Sedge Meadow
- D Big Woods/Maple-Basswood Forest
- E Prairie
- F Oak Savanna
- G Entry Sign-Settler's Ridge



www.writersrisingup.org
www.efeinterpretivetrail.org

How Eden Prairie Was Named

When EDEN PRAIRIE township was settled in 1852, it had a fine natural prairie in its southern portion along the Minnesota River. The town was named, in 1853, after Elizabeth Fries Ellet, one of the best known writers of the 19th Century, expressed her admiration for this beautiful prairie as the garden spot of the territory. Ellet wrote for an eastern audience eager to read about the new frontier in her "Summer Rambles in the West." She also visited Lake Minnetonka in August 1852, less than three months after it was visited and named by Gov. Ramsey. The city of Eden Prairie was incorporated on October 22, 1962; its first post office operated from 1855-1902; the second was transferred from Washburn (1874-1903) in 1903 and operated until 1944.



Great Horned Owl
Big Woods Biome

Trail Supporters

The Elizabeth Fries Ellet Interpretive Trail is supported by the Eden Prairie Parks and Recreation Department and approved by the Eden Prairie Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Commission on December 1, 2003. On December 16, 2003 the Eden Prairie City Council approved the Elizabeth Fries Ellet Interpretive Trail to be installed at the Richard T. Anderson Conservation Area in Eden Prairie, MN. The Eden Prairie School Board gave their approval to the project in 2005.

The Elizabeth Fries Ellet Interpretive Trail is privately sponsored by Writers Rising Up, an Eden Prairie 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation providing a recreational and educational trail within the City of Eden Prairie's Richard T. Anderson Conservation Area wholly supported by private funds.

Writers Rising Up is a tax-exempt public charity under Section 501 (c) (3). Your tax deductible contributions will provide programming support for writers and artists who participate in workshops, joint publishing ventures, literary readings, educational and recreational events in the community, including art and literary presentations and installations.

Writers Rising Up
16526 W. 78th St #163
Eden Prairie, MN 55346
writersrisingupblog@yahoo.com



Northern Harrier
Sedge Meadow Biome

Sign Content

- On-site photos of landscape panoramas and plants taken in the four seasons by Writers Rising Up and the Kestrel Design Group.
- Historic letters, journals, photos, and art from the Minnesota and Eden Prairie Historical Societies, Smithsonian, Library of Congress, Huntington Museum and other local and national collections.
- Information on the Dakota botanical, medicinal, dietary and aromatic uses of plants provided by the Mdewakonton Sioux Community.
- Quotes from Ellet's book "Summer Rambles in the West" based on her journey to Minnesota, her letters to publishers, and her publications in journals of the day.
- An interactive "Did you Know" web portal for visitors to find out more about local species.
- The signs include proprietary images of the photographers, writers, artists, botanists who captured Minnesota's natural beauty.
- Workout distances and difficulties are included on the trail map including measurements from sign to sign which will be accessible on the signs and on the web site.
- Birders' Entomologists' Botanists Blog.
- Web site and collateral art by Shelley Getten, local poet and artist.
- Bug and animal species photographs by Allen Blake Sheldon, a Minnesota Book Award Nominee.



Cerulean Warbler
Bottomland Forest Biome

SIGN SPONSORS:

- Big Woods Sign - Metropolitan Airports Commission
- Bottomland Forest Sign - Bill Clark Family of Eden Prairie
- Minnesota River Sign - Eden Prairie Lions Club
- Oak Savanna Sign - Eden Prairie Foundation
- Prairie Sign - Metropolitan Airports Commission
- Sedge Meadow Sign - Eden Prairie Lions Club
- Settlers Ridge Sign - Eden Prairie Lions Club

To Make a Contribution:

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- Sign Interpretation - Writers Rising Up
- Sign Design - The Kestrel Design Group
- Collateral Bird Images - Shelley Getten

TRAIL GUIDE

ELIZABETH FRIES ELLET
INTERPRETIVE TRAIL



Library of Congress

LOCATED AT THE
RICHARD T. ANDERSON
CONSERVATION AREA



Great Blue Heron
Minnesota River Biome

18700 Flying Cloud Drive
Eden Prairie, MN
(1.6 miles west of Lion's Tap Restaurant)