

USING HISTORICAL DATA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF VIRGIN TALLGRASS PRAIRIE.

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Abstract: Proper management of a tallgrass prairie can be aided by knowledge of its history. This data can be used to verify whether or not a remnant is virgin prairie. Historical facts about a particular remnant can be found in some unconventional places. Local historical society museums often contain valuable photographs. Original survey books from the 19th century with useful records from presettlement times will sometimes be found in County Engineer Offices. Large databases of information can also be found via the Internet. One of the most overlooked methods to obtain information is personal interviews. A visit to a nursing home or a retirement center can often provide details found nowhere else. These techniques have aided in verification of some sites as virgin prairie, and have proven other sites to be recreated prairie. The author will provide useful web sites and demonstrate several of the techniques he has used to study prairie remnant management practices.