# Barnhart Prairie Keepers of the Prairie Program

May 1, 2021- October 31, 2021

In 1998, the Barnhart Family had a dream of creating a high quality prairie for future generations to experience. By early 2000, this became a reality when 80 acres were placed in a conservation easement held by the Champaign County SWCD. The overall project gained Nature Preserve status in fall of 2005. Since then, the prairie has thrived, but there have been challenges managing the property that have led to the introduction of this program.

Thank you for your interest in joining our pilot year of a membership program to the Barnhart Nature Preserve located at 1499 CR 1200 N, Urbana IL! In an attempt to manage years of vandalism and trespassing, we have tried a variety of opening times ranging from fully open, open on designated days, and fully closed. We know that many of you have missed being able to visit more freely, so we have designed this program to let well-intentioned visitors enjoy our wonderful prairie. All members will be known as Keepers of the Prairie, since together we will protect this incredible site. To become a Keeper, you must be willing to follow the rules of our Prairie, listed below.

Keepers will be given access to the code to the gate. During the hours from 7 am – 7 pm, May 1 - October 31, you can come and let yourself in, closing the gate behind you during your visit. When you leave you must close and lock the gate. Most of our vandalism issues happen during the night, so it's crucial that everyone closes properly upon leaving.

## Rules

- Please be respectful of our neighbors and only use the Prairie parking lot, trails and picnic table between designated hours 7 am – 7 pm (closing at 7 pm, not arriving at 7 pm).

- Please close and lock the gate behind you every time you come in and leave. Please do not share the code that is given to you.

- Please obey the rules posted- stay on the trails, take nothing but photos, leave nothing but footprints. Give all animals, insects, birds, etc their space.

- No pets allowed, especially dogs (we love dogs too, but the prairie is not the place for them).

- Do not go off trail. We no longer have a long trail deep into the prairie to be respectful of known animal habitats. Even though you may remember that trail, it no longer exists.

Please complete the keeper form and send it to Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District or email the signed form to Hannah.McDonald@il.nacdnet.net.

By doing so, you agree to obey the rules above, which protect the prairie.

## Yearly Donations

The Barnhart Prairie Restoration Project, a Non Profit organization, oversees the maintenance of the entire site and depends on donations to help maintain this high-quality nature preserve.

To be a Keeper, the amount you donate is completely up to you, but the following are suggestions:

$50 donation helps us tackle invasive species control
$100 donation helps us invest in land management for our trails and property
$500 will help us hire an intern to provide educational resources to the next generation of prairie ecologists!

Please complete the keeper form and send it to Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District. By doing so, you agree to obey the rules above, which protect the prairie.

Full Name_____

Email_____

Mobile_____

Vehicle Make and Model_____

License Plate#_____

Signature_____ Date_____

We hope to hold monthly Open Dates to the public. If you are willing to volunteer to open the gate in the morning and close it that evening, please check here (We will contact you for more information):

I can help! _____

Would you like for us to create a Facebook Group for the Keepers of the Prairie to share information to you and for people to connect / share photos?

Sure! _____

Keeper donations should be written to the Barnhart Prairie Restoration Project (nonprofit status) and sent to Champaign County SWCD, 2110 Park Court, Ste. C, Champaign, IL 61821. If there are any questions, feel free to call 217-352-3536 ext. 3.