

Acres: 30

Year Acquired: 1985

Conservation Values: Native Blackland prairie remenant, urban green space

Location: [FIND ME ON A MAP](#)



History: The 30 acres named Ennis Kachina Prairie, within the city limits of Ennis, is part of a parcel of land purchased in 1873 by Captain Mark Latimer, a banker. Remaining undisturbed, it was a virgin tract, part of the Southern Extension of the North American tall grass Prairie. In 1950, Ennis native John C. Blassingame, a landscape architect with the Texas Highway Department, suggested to Mrs. C. A. (Edna Mae) McMurray that the abundance of bluebonnets on the area called Country Club Hills would make a beautiful pilgrimage for wildflower lovers. In 1952 and continuing into the mid 60's , this area was the main attraction of the Ennis Bluebonnet Trails. In 1966 Ennis Garden Club, fearing development of the area, asked the Mayor to "set aside the Hills at Country Club Lake as a part of the Ennis Bluebonnet Trails, and to be designated as a city park."

By 1971, there were fewer bluebonnets and more varieties of wildflowers, especially some of the more endangered species. The Garden Club then presented a resolution to the City Commission to dedicate the property as a "Wildflower Preserve." It was adopted on May 13, 1971 and named Kachina for the Indian legend of the bluebonnet and was a first for Texas. The Ennis High School Agricultural Program used Kachina Prairie to train range, pasture and land judging teams and, in 1979, the team placed 1st in the National Range and Pasture Judging Contest. Mrs. McMurray continued to oversee Ennis Kachina Prairie, along with the President of Ennis Garden Club, Mrs. McCluer Brewster. Other stewards over the years have been the director of the Ennis Parks Department, Dick Roberts of Ennis, Dr. Fred Smeins of Texas A&M, and Dr. Harold Laughlin of the Heard Museum in McKinney, president of TLC when preserve was acquired. It was given to TLC in 1985.

When the federal government was planning the Super Conducting Super Collider, the officials walked our prairie and were impressed with the quality of grasses. The Garden Club then asked Dr. Sam Baker of the SSC, the City Manager, Ennis Fire Marshall, TLC, and Ellis County Nature Society, to help with a management plan to preserve Kachina Prairie. SSC hired Bill Neiman, owner of a wild seed company in Flower Mound, TX, to collect seeds for them, in return for which he would conduct the first burn. In March 1992 burn was approved by The City Commission and in October, seeds were collected and the burn conducted successfully. TLC and Ellis County Nature Society have written management plans. In the future the Garden Club will continue to follow these plans and obtain funding and volunteer help when needed.

City officials have come to realize what a gem they have. The City of Ennis pays expenses and helps with mowing, annual burns, keeping fire department vehicles available and some labor. A representative of the Ennis Garden Club is on the Stewardship Committee (Sandy Anderson in 1998-2003) The preserve is completely open to the public at all times and is especially beautiful in the spring.

Attractive and permanent signs have been put up alerting the community of their "preserve" and some information about TLC. On one trip by TLC stewardship committee members, teenaged fishermen were seen working the creek and there is park area nearby for picnics and gatherings that is used all year round.