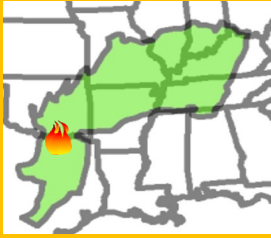


Clymer Meadow Preserve

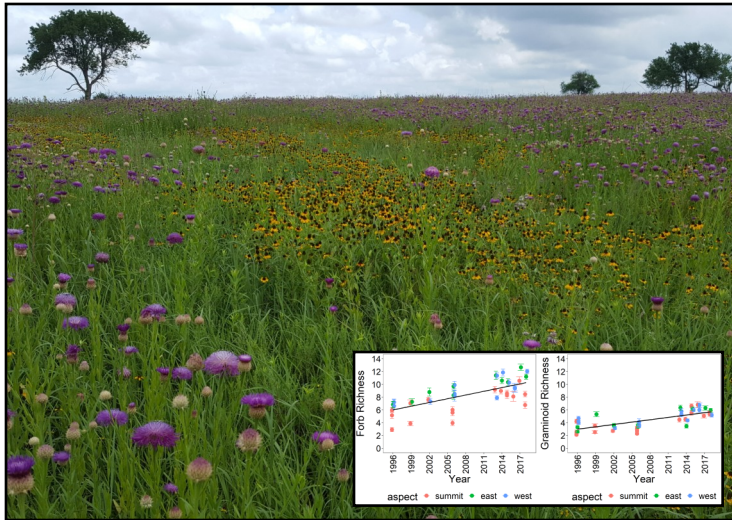
FIRE SCIENCE HOT SPOTS



In this feature, we bring into focus
fire science on-the-ground

The 1,450-acre Clymer Meadow Preserve, located in the Blackland Prairie ecoregion of north-central Texas, has been owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) since 1986. The preserve is part of a larger conservation area that includes land owned by TNC and other private owners, and contains some of the largest and most diverse remnant prairies of the region. At the time of TNC's acquisition, the meadow had been managed by annual haying (and occasional burning prior to 1950) for about 100 years and, as a result, was dominated by warm-season perennial grasses, including yellow Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*, bottom-left panel and inset). By diversifying the management regime to include recurring prescribed fire (of all seasons), grazing, and also occasional haying or mowing, plant diversity and the abundance of early-successional, disturbance-dependent forbs and prairie specialists has increased (see graph, inset top-left panel). Two globally imperiled prairie plant communities are represented at the preserve, little bluestem-Indiangrass and gamagrass-switchgrass (inset top-right) community series types. Wildflowers, such as clasp leaf coneflower (*Rudbeckia amplexicaulis*, center in top-left image), American basketflower (*Centaurea americana*, fore/background same image), and Maximilian sunflower (*Helianthus maximiliani*, bottom-right image) are abundant.

The Nature Conservancy 
Protecting nature. Preserving life.



Interesting micro-topographic variations called 'gilgai' add to the complexity of this landscape. These irregular or round, shallow basins result from the shrink/swell action of clay soil layers during dry/wet cycles, and can influence the composition of the plant communities. Shown in the top-left image, moisture-tolerating species such as clasp leaf coneflower occupy the frequently wet micro-lows, while plants tolerant of drier conditions, such as American basketflower, are common on the micro-ridges. Clymer Meadow serves as a center for study and has been the site of

more than a dozen scientific investigations ranging in scope from inventories of prairie invertebrates to noxious weed control. Universities, private research organizations, and public and private primary and secondary schools have used the preserve as a teaching site. Click on each photo for a full-size downloadable image, or view all [HERE](#). Photo credits- Top-left: Charlotte Reemts; top-right: Brandon Belcher; all others: Jacqueline Ferrato.

