

THE CAJUN PRAIRIE: A SOCIETY, A RESTORATION PROJECT, A BOOK AND A HISTORY OF RESEARCH.

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Abstract: The Cajun Prairie is a 2.5 million hectare region in southwestern Louisiana. The region was primarily settled by exiled French Canadians, now referred to as 'Cajuns.' The native prairie habitat is essentially extinguished with only a few small railroad rights-of-way remnants remaining in ever-decreasing condition. The authors and a group of prairie enthusiasts created the Cajun Prairie Habitat Preservation Society as a non-profit group to preserve and restore this prairie in 1988. In cooperation with the City of Eunice and Union Pacific Railroad, the society initiated and maintained a restoration project in the city. The society purchased the site and continues to develop the site into a park with paved trails and more. A new book by MFV entitled 'The Cajun Prairie: A natural history' recounts the history of the region as well as of the society and its efforts. Further it provides a summary of the research by members of the society on the natural history of the prairie. As a whole, the society, book, research and collaborative efforts of hundreds of people provide a story a region of the country in dire peril of complete loss of their habitat, natural heritage and cultural heritage.