

NORTHERN ARIZONA'S COLD-TEMPERATE GRASSLANDS

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Many cold-temperature grasslands, known locally as prairies and parks, exist in northern Arizona amid thousands of acres of ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) forests and within an easy drive of the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. While these grasslands garner little attention from tourists and only limited study from grassland ecologists, they are unique because of their high-elevation, semi-arid, wind-swept environment. These grasslands are not the small, beautiful montane meadows found throughout the Rocky Mountains or on the San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff, they are mixed- or shortgrass communities typically existing on relatively flat, often large sites that usually have some history of grazing, and shrub and coniferous tree invasion due to fire suppression. In this presentation, I will provide an overview of the history and ecology of these largely ignored grasslands. In addition, I will discuss restoration efforts at The Nature Conservancy's Hart Prairie and U.S. Forest Service surveys of vegetation change on Government Prairie and Garland Prairie.