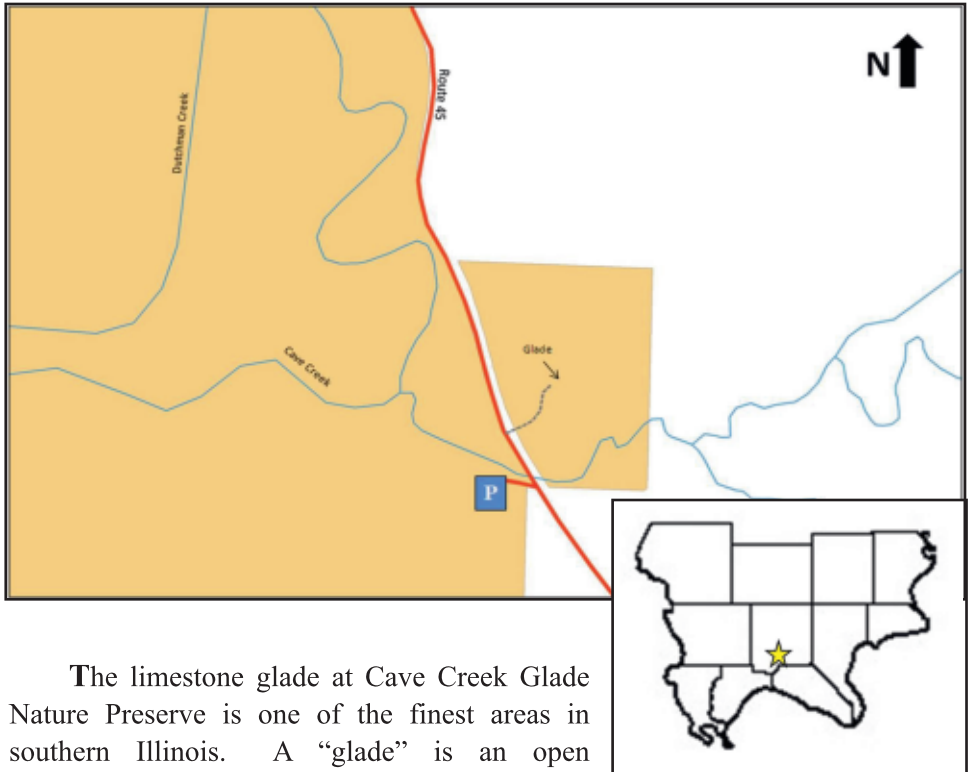


Cave Creek Glade Trail

Cache River State Natural Area

0.2 mile Round Trip - Difficult Rating

Trailhead: 37.3575, -88.8856



The limestone glade at Cave Creek Glade Nature Preserve is one of the finest areas in southern Illinois. A “glade” is an open community, often devoid of trees, that contains sun-loving perennial plants such as prairie dock, gray-headed coneflower, frostweed, wild petunia, and several species of milkweeds. Scattered chinquapin oaks dot the glade and outstanding views to the west and south can be had from the top of the glade. An abundance of yellow pimpernel grows on the top of the glade along with the uncommon dwarf hackberry. Notable is the state threatened blue sage that can be found mid-slope next to the path. Many limestone obligate plants occur on the glade such as marbleseed, purple cliffbrake fern, and gray-headed coneflower. Other interesting plants include aromatic aster, American agave, spiderwort, obedient plant, and hairy lip fern.

This Illinois Nature Preserve is owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and is part of the Cache River State Natural Area in Johnson County. Natural resources staff and volunteers have performed extensive restoration work at this glade, including frequent prescribed fire. This type of management

keeps the glade clear of shrubs and promotes the growth of herbaceous plants. This is particularly beneficial to pale purple coneflowers, which provide a burst of pink in June. This spectacular wildflower explosion is one of the best nature scenes in southern Illinois.

This site is located south of Vienna along Highway 45. A small parking lot is located on the west side of Highway 45 and south of Cave Creek. Go over the bridge and cross the road to access the glade. There is no trail at this natural area, but a small path leads up to the top. The soil is very loose so use care and stay on the path. The glade can also be very hot and dry in the summer months so be sure to bring some water and a sturdy pair of boots.

Notable wildflowers present at site

Blue sage

Salvia azurea var. *grandiflora*

Prairie dock

Silphium terebinthinaceum

Gray-headed coneflower

Ratibida pinnata

Pale purple coneflower

Echinacea simulata

Yellow pimpernel

Taenidia integerrima



Pale purple coneflower in bloom on the glade. Blue sage (inset)