

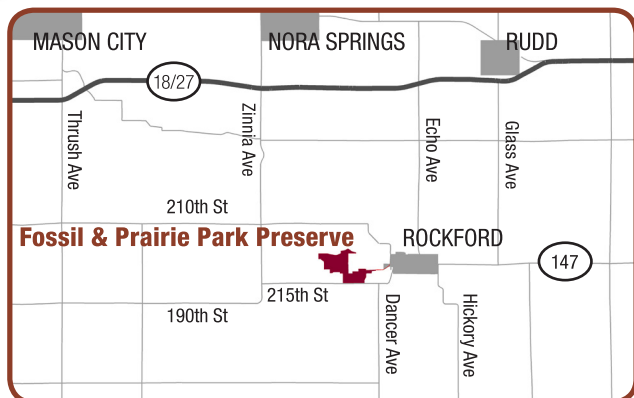
Fossil & Prairie Park Preserve

The Fossil & Prairie Park Preserve, located in western Floyd County, is one of the premiere public fossil collecting areas in the United States. Dedicated in 1991, the park includes an abandoned shale pit, preserved kilns, and 60 acres of native prairie. Visitors can learn about the history of the area in the park's visitor center.

Rocks exposed within the park are one of three important surface exposures of the Lime Creek Formation (named for the waterway now known as the Winnebago River). The Lime Creek Formation is Devonian in age, about 375 million years old. During this time, Iowa lay at tropical latitudes near the equator, and seas covered most of what is now Iowa. The relatively soft limestones and shales in the Lime Creek Formation yield abundant small fossils, collectively known as the Lime Creek Fauna.



Fossil collecting is encouraged within the park. Look inside to see the types of fossils you may find.



Fossil & Prairie Park Preserve
1227 215th St
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Open Sunrise to Sunset

*Fossil photographs courtesy of University of Iowa Paleontology Repository.
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Collect fossils of the ancient sea creatures that lived in what was a subtropical ocean



The incredibly fossiliferous rocks exposed at the park.

Bryozoans—colonial animals that lived attached to the sea floor. They have branching forms and can be identified by their tiny pores.



Brachiopods—shelled animals that lived attached to the floor of warm shallow seas in a protective cover of hinged shells. Brachiopods are the most common fossils in the park.



Crinoids—animals that lived anchored to the sea floor by flexible, rooted stems. Segments of the rounded stems are commonly found as fossils.



Corals—animals that lived attached to the floor of the shallow, clear, warm tropical sea. The two principal types are **solitary** (single animals) and **colonial** (lived in connected colonies). An example of a solitary coral is shown above, while a colonial coral is shown below.



Pelecypods—animals that lived in a protective shell. They are often confused with brachiopods. The top and bottom shells of pelecypods are identical (those of brachiopods are different).



Gastropods—snails that scavenged the ancient sea floor. The snails moved on flat, muscular feet and could withdraw inside their shells for protection.

