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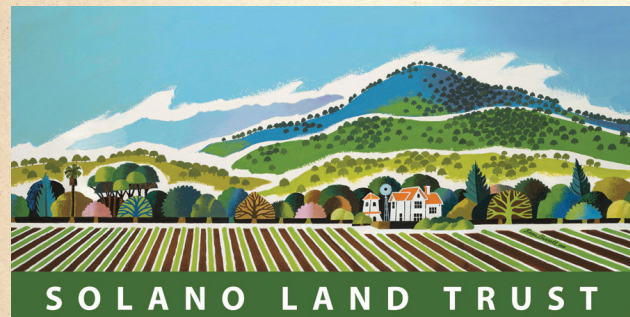
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*Land connects us all*



Original art by Don Birrell Cover photo by Bud Turner

# Jepson Prairie PRESERVE



Land connects us all...  
protecting it today,  
saving it for tomorrow

## Walk in fields of gold

Welcome to Jepson Prairie Preserve, an internationally known and nationally recognized vernal pool ecosystem. Vernal pools used to dominate California's Central Valley, but over 90% of that habitat has been lost. A stroll through Jepson Prairie Preserve is like walking into California's pre-settlement past. In the spring, thousands of tiny wildflowers paint the preserve in ribbons of yellow, purple, and white.

### Understanding Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are temporary bodies of fresh water created by winter rains. A clay layer just under the surface soil expands and creates an impermeable barrier, so rainwater fills the low spots as the soil is saturated. These pools become the habitat for a complex world of plants and animals which adapted over time to survive a habitat that floods in winter and then dries completely during the hot summer months.

### Cycles of Life at Jepson Prairie

Jepson Prairie changes with the seasons. The three phases of vernal pools are *wet*, *flowering*, and *dry*. During the *wet phase* the vernal pools fill with rainwater. Beneath the surface of the water, vernal pools are teeming with life.

Rare, vernal pool-specific invertebrates, including the Conservancy Fairy Shrimp and Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp, hatch and reproduce during this short *wet phase*. Specially certified Jepson Prairie Docents train to handle these rare organisms.



Vernal pool tadpole shrimp

The pools are most beautiful during the *flowering phase* in the spring when the water begins to evaporate.

Endemic flowering plants explode into colorful bands of yellow, blue, and white.

Though each plant is small, thousands of tiny blossoms provide showy displays.

The magnificent flower display changes continuously from approximately March through May, then fades when the weather becomes warmer.

The *dry phase* begins with the hot summer weather. Any remaining water evaporates, the fairy and tadpole shrimp die, the flowers set seed, and the once-lush grasses turn golden brown during this six- to eight-month dry season, waiting for the winter rains to come again to repeat the cycle.



Bright yellow Goldfields



Downingia flowers add a splash of purple April – May

Doug Wirtz

Doug Wirtz



### A Visitor Area and you

Jepson Prairie Preserve is getting a new Visitor Area to help make your experience more interactive and enjoyable! There will be a gathering area and a new trail with interpretive signage.

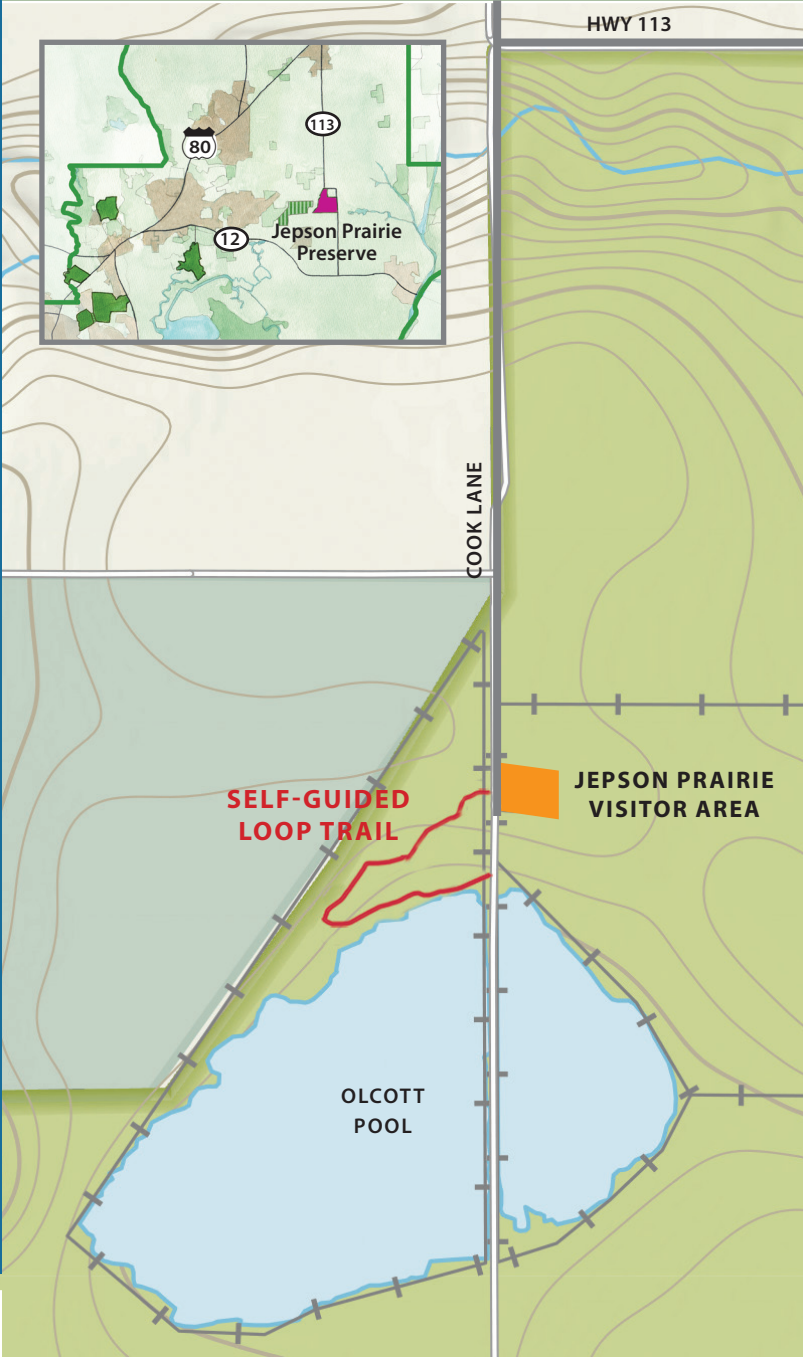
We cannot do it without YOU!

There are many ways you can get involved:

- train to become a docent
- attend a tour
- tell your family and friends to visit, and
- donate money to help build the area.

**YOU** can be an important part of the transformation of Jepson Prairie Preserve. Help build the new visitor area where everyone can enjoy the vast beauty; from the wide open sky and prairie to the microscopic species that thrive here.

For more information on how you can help, contact SLT staff at [volunteer@solanolandtrust.org](mailto:volunteer@solanolandtrust.org) or (707) 709-9022.



- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Jepson Prairie Preserve | Other protected land |
| Vernal Pools            | Non-protected land   |

### Bringing it all together

Jepson Prairie is an outstanding example of claypan vernal pools in California. It is a remnant of the freshwater wetlands that dominated the Central Valley for millennia, and it supports a complex ecosystem including endangered plants and invertebrates, migratory waterfowl, and wading birds. The centerpiece of the Prairie is Olcott Pool, a large playa pool that is home to a number of endangered plants and animals.

Learn more about Jepson Prairie by taking a tour, or on our website: [solanolandtrust.org](http://solanolandtrust.org)



Islands of yellow carpet

Jepson Prairie Preserve is a jewel of California's environmental legacy. Every effort is made to manage the preserve with best management practices. Please support this standard of excellence by getting involved today.



Enjoy a guided tour from mid-March through mid-May

### Visiting the prairie

To see the vast expanse of wildflowers shown on the cover, join Jepson Prairie Docents for a **guided tour on weekends from mid-March through mid-May**. See [solanolandtrust.org](http://solanolandtrust.org) for specific dates and times.

Expert docents will give you a close-up view of the plants and animals of Jepson Prairie. It takes passion for and commitment to conservation to ensure these special places will be here for future generations!

You can enjoy the Visitor Area and use the Self-guided Loop Trail any day of the year for bird-watching and to admire the vistas and wildlife. Please stay on the trails and leave your pets at home to help us preserve this unique and delicate habitat. Pack a jacket fall through spring because it can be a little breezy, and remember your camera, water, and sunscreen. There is no potable water on premises.

### Directions to Jepson Prairie Preserve:

Jepson Prairie Preserve is 12 miles south of Dixon, and eight miles north of Highway 12. From CA Highway 113 turn onto Cook Lane to reach the Visitor Area.



New benches and Gathering Area