

Prairie Moraine Park / Ice Age National Scenic Trail



Prairies & Oak Savannas on the Terminal Moraine

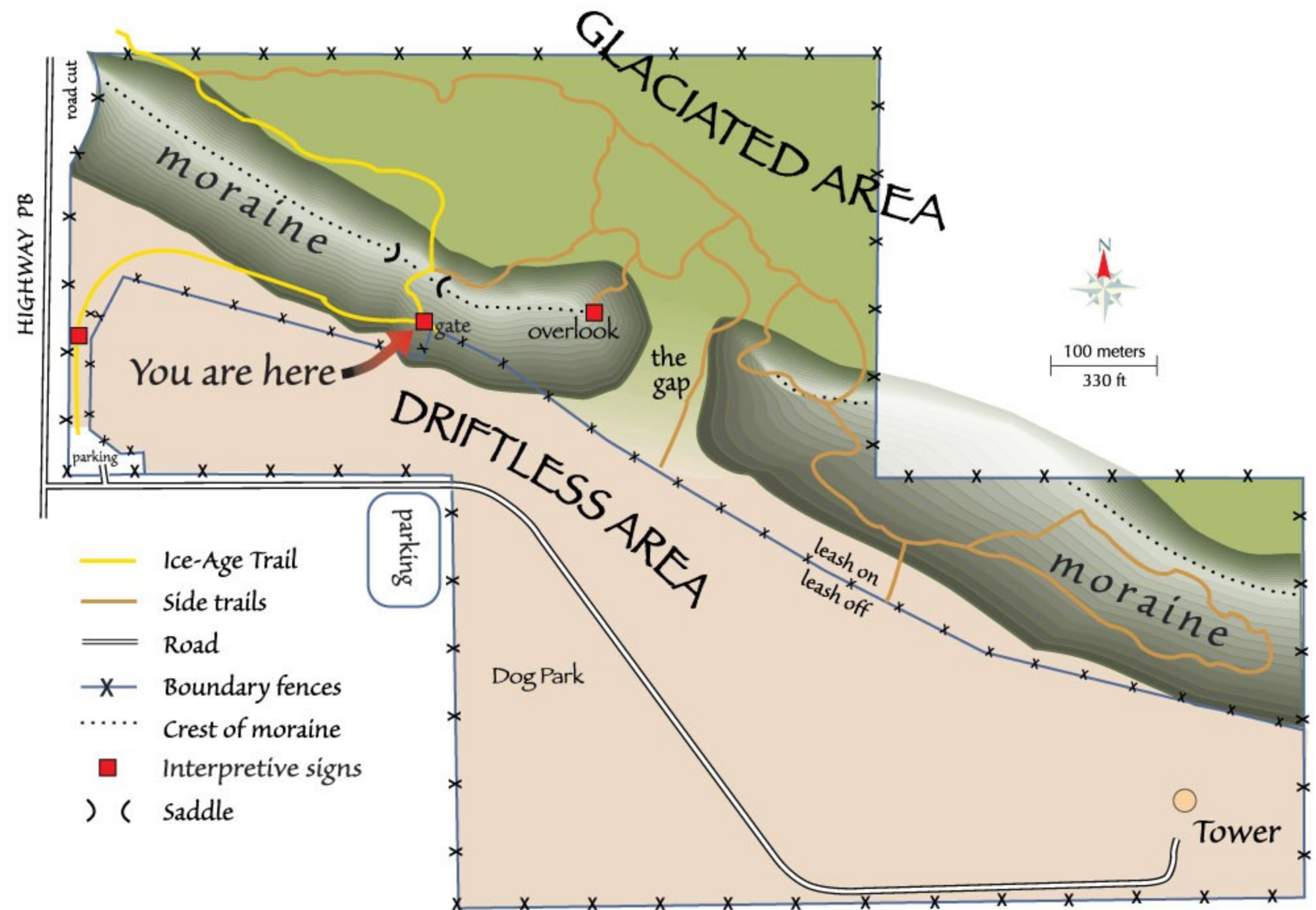
You have entered the northern, leash-on, part of Prairie Moraine County Park, which is crossed by the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. The trail extends over 1,000 miles from Interstate Park, on the Minnesota border, to Potawatomi State Park, on the Door Peninsula.

The park is an exemplary place to interpret landscape features created during the Ice Age. Here the Ice Age Trail closely follows the outermost glacial moraine at one of Wisconsin's best moraine viewing spots on public land. Moraines are among the most characteristic glacial landforms and the one in front of you is a striking example. This moraine formed at the climax of the Wisconsin Glaciation, the last major expansion of the North American ice sheet which entered the state about 30,000 years ago and melted back out of the state about 11,000 years ago.



The Moraine (Looking North)

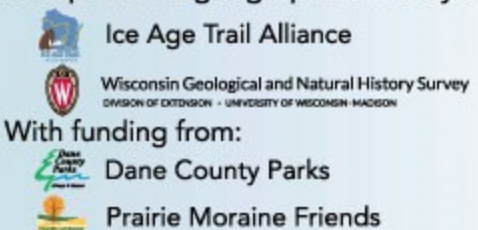
The ridge before you is a moraine, here 40 to 60 feet high. A moraine is a ridge that forms at the edge of a glacier where rock debris melts out of the ice and where the glacier margin is stationary. It is stationary when the forward movement of the flowing mass of ice is balanced by the backward melting of its edge. Every inch of ice movement is matched by every inch of ice melted off the front.



Prairies & Oak Savannas

This steep, rock-studded moraine provides habitat for native prairie and oak savanna remnants. This landscape is a mosaic of plant community types that represent a continuum from prairie to forest. The bur and white oak trees, like those just uphill, can thrive on these morainal ridges. Fires set by Native Americans helped the prairie and fire tolerant oak trees flourish while killing back invading shrubs. Dane County volunteers from the Ice Age Trail Alliance continue this active management to keep the prairie and oak savannas flourishing.

Interpretive signage provided by:



Dane County Parks
(608) 224-3730 • www.danecountyparks.com
TTY: Call WI Relay 711

Prairie Moraine County Park
6724 Wesner Road
Verona, WI 53593