

Hello,

My name is Amy, and I'm a prairie ecologist with the Blue Mounds Area Project, a local conservation organization.

I'm writing to request you not resume mowing at the Mount Pleasant Cemetery on Bower Road. I'm familiar with this site from my grad school research project. I resurveyed more than 60 prairie remnant sites across southern Wisconsin. All of these sites were first mapped and surveyed in the 1950's by Wisconsin ecologist John Curtis. About 20% of these sites were cemeteries with graves dating back to the early 1800's.

Historical records show that none of these sites were being mowed in the 1950's. Some of them were managed with occasional prescribed fire, and all of them had lots of species of native prairie grasses and flowers. In short, they still looked a lot like they did when the early settlers and Civil war vets were buried there. When I returned to the same site 60 years later to compare the original species lists, I found that some cemeteries were being regularly mowed, while others were saved from the mower.

When these sites are managed with regular mowing, the native prairie plants will disappear from the site, just like they have disappeared from so much of our modern landscape. Please keep this cemetery -- and the piece of history it represents -- intact by saving this site from mowing.

Sincerely,
Amy Alstad