

Facts about Prairiewoods

Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center is a retreat and conference center located on 70 acres of prairie and woodland in Hiawatha, Iowa. Founded by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in 1996, Prairiewoods includes the Center, a 19-room Guest House, two Hermitages, a Private Residence and an I-Renew Training Facility. In addition to these buildings, it features a Media Center, Meditation Room, Gift Shop, extensive garden, outdoor labyrinth, walking trails and traditional sweat lodge.

Center

The Center is the heart of Prairiewoods' activities. It contains staff offices, multiple meeting rooms, holistic service rooms, a fully-staffed kitchen and dining area, a media center, a meditation room and a gift shop.

Guest House

The Guest House provides clean, simple rooms for guests who wish to stay overnight. Each guest room has its own sink, and a bathroom with shower is shared between two double rooms. There are several common areas, including lounges, kitchens and a large open porch. Healthy, fresh meals cooked on-site are also available.

Hermitages

Two hermitages (small cottages in the woods) allow overnight lodging for those who want more quiet and solitude. They are simple, one-room buildings for one person, equipped with a stove, refrigerator, bathroom and other amenities. These earth-friendly buildings are powered entirely by solar energy.

Grounds

Prairiewoods' 70 acres of woods and prairie and about two miles of walking trails offer a haven for those in search of quiet, solitude and a connection with the natural world. The grounds also feature a labyrinth and a traditional Native American sweat lodge.

Prairiewoods Quick Facts

PURPOSE

Ecospirituality Retreat and Conference Center

LOCATION

Hiawatha, Iowa (north of Cedar Rapids, less than 1 mile East of I-380)

FOUNDED BY

Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in La Crosse, Wisconsin

DIRECTOR

Laurie Harris

BOARD CHAIR

Alan F. Kessler

STAFF

20 plus hundreds of active volunteers

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Find "PrairiewoodsFSC" on all the major social media sites

Green Facts about Prairiewoods

All Buildings

- Eco-friendly architectural design melds buildings into existing natural landscape
- Conservation of large trees around buildings provides shade and enhances aesthetic beauty
- Berming around structures assists with insulation and noise pollution abatement
- Solar tubes and large windows light spaces naturally
- Compact fluorescent lights and LED lights create efficient lighting
- Low-flow toilets conserve water
- Energy-efficient appliances reduce energy consumption
- A holistic land management approach includes prairie and woodland restoration efforts
- Retention ponds allow for responsible drainage of storm water and provide aquatic habitat
- Green-cleaning practices and avoidance of pesticides reduce our chemical impact on humans and the environment

The Center

- 100 solar modules (17,500-watt system capable of generating 22,500 kilowatt hours of electricity in one year) are tied into the electrical grid and provide about 45% of our electricity
- Solar tubes in the restrooms bring natural light and reduce electricity usage



Guest House

- Solar hot water system provides hot water for showers, laundry and other uses

Hermitages

- Straw bale construction enhances insulation and models bio-friendly, recyclable housing options
- Solar panels provide all electrical power, allowing these buildings to be independent of the electrical grid
- Radiant floor heating provides heat for the buildings
- Wetland septic system recycles waste and grey water

Garden

- Provides guests with locally-grown produce
- Solar hot water system provides heat for year-round gardening in our hoop house
- Root cellar provides natural cold storage
- Composting returns nutrients to the earth

I-Renew Training Facility

- Solar power allows this building to be independent of the electrical grid
- Classroom setting provides hands-on education for installing roof-top solar photovoltaic panels and solar hot water systems

Private Residence

- Trombe wall provides passive solar heating