

Natural Resources Management Activities

DeKalb County Forest Preserve District

May and Early June 2018

May and June consist of mostly plant work throughout the district as a whole. While weeds are a focus of our work we have also been able to spend a considerable amount of time working in the greenhouse and the propagation and seed beds.

Weed work has mostly consisted of spraying Reed Canary grass. Reed Canary grass can be dominant in disturbed wetlands and in our high quality wetland sites we fight the fight every year to push it back and try to eradicate it. We have made strides in some locations while in others it remains the dominant grass. This year we have decided to focus our efforts on the areas that were burned this spring and we will continue this focus in the coming years but most of our efforts will focus on the high quality wetland sites.

Here is a link to Reed Canary Grass (RCG) if you would like to learn more.

http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/grasses/plants/rc_grass.htm

Early June sees RCG season winding down and we transition over to Canada Thistle.

Canada thistle is another pesky import that can form large patches and become dominant. It tend to grow in dryer habitat than RCG but will push out the native plants a decrease density and diversity. We battle this one hard for about a month and then switch over to some other nasty weeds that I will tell you about next report.

(Another link: http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/weeds/plants/canada_thistle.htm)

A little bit about the herbicides that we use. Whenever possible we explore other options to herbicide use but in the case of most of our nastiest weeds herbicide is the most cost effective and least time consuming. We do a lot of research and investigation into what herbicides are new, most environmentally friendly, and are as specific as possible. Specificity is very important when applying herbicides. When spraying RCG we use a grass specific herbicide that does not kill sedges, rushes, or forbs. When spraying Canada Thistle we use a herbicide that does not kill grasses, sedges, rushes, milkweeds, mints, and many other composites but does an excellent job of knocking back the thistle. We use target specific herbicides whenever possible so as not to create large dead patches in the sprayed areas. An herbicide like glyphosate (commonly called roundup) is non-specific and would leave large dead patches. We use this one as little as possible.

The other plant work that has started to ramp up is planting, greenhouse and seed bed work. We have already grown and transplanted several flats of plants from the greenhouse into the preserves. We have also collected our first few ounces of seed from the plants in the seeds beds. This is the result of a lot of hard work from many of our dedicated employees and a ton of support from Terry and Al Roloff. I would like to extend an invitation to any Board members who would like to come down to Afton and check out the operations there. The pictures that I have included in past reports don't really do it justice and I think you all would be impressed.



Carex gracillima, Graceful Sedge, was grown in the seed beds at Afton and was collected early June. This seed will be added to our seed mixes this fall which will be spread in the Nelson addition to Prairie Oaks.