

Natural Resources Management Activities

DeKalb County Forest Preserve District

February 2018

1. Construction on the new water control structures for the Afton mitigation and wetland bank wrapped up for the most part in early February. There are a few touch up items that the contractor will need to address. Staff have begun the process of preparing the steel gates that will control the water levels behind the new culvert sections. After the gates are installed and the contractor finishes with their punch list we will do the final seeding and install guard rails on the culvert sections.
2. With spring just around the corner we have been preparing the new propagation greenhouse for the growing season. A fan with a thermostat has been installed to keep the temperature in the greenhouse regulated as well as louvres to facilitate in air flow. We seeded over 50 propagation boxes with native flowers, grasses, and sedges that we will eventually plant out in the prairies, woods, and wetlands throughout the district.
3. Stewards got together at the shop at Afton on a cold day and built over 20 bluebird boxes. It was a nice morning of sharing stories over coffee and staying out of the elements.



Stewards and bird houses.

4. Natural resource staff and volunteers have spent several days at Knute Olson Forest preserve clearing invasive brush. Knute Olson has an interesting history and quite a bit of potential to be a really great preserve. One of the areas that we are most excited about is one of the old gravel borrow areas. It has had all of the top soil stripped away and the soil that remains is mostly gravel and sand. This gives us the unique opportunity to install a dry gravel prairie which is a soil type that is not typically not found in DeKalb County. We also installed several blue bird boxes, a wood duck box, a turtle nesting area, and a turtle basking log.



Stewards pose for photo by bird house that they built and installed.



Patrick McCrea and Josh Clark removing brush and burning brush piles at Knute Olson Forest Preserve.

5. Preparations for the burn season has begun. Equipment has been cleaned, repaired and tested. I have been preparing maps and permits and writing up burn plans for the units we intend to burn the spring.



6. Staff attended the Illinois Association of Conservation Districts conference held at Starved Rock State Park Lodge on February 15th and 16th. The topics covered many different topics relevant to natural resource management and gave us a great opportunity to network and brainstorm with other professionals in our field.
I presented with Gene Walsh from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Wetland Banking. He covered the regulatory side and I presented on the on the ground work that goes into a wetland bank. He again complimented us on the great job we do at Afton and said that “ the Afton wetland bank is one of the best in the region”.