

## Natural Resources Management Activities

### DeKalb County Forest Preserve District

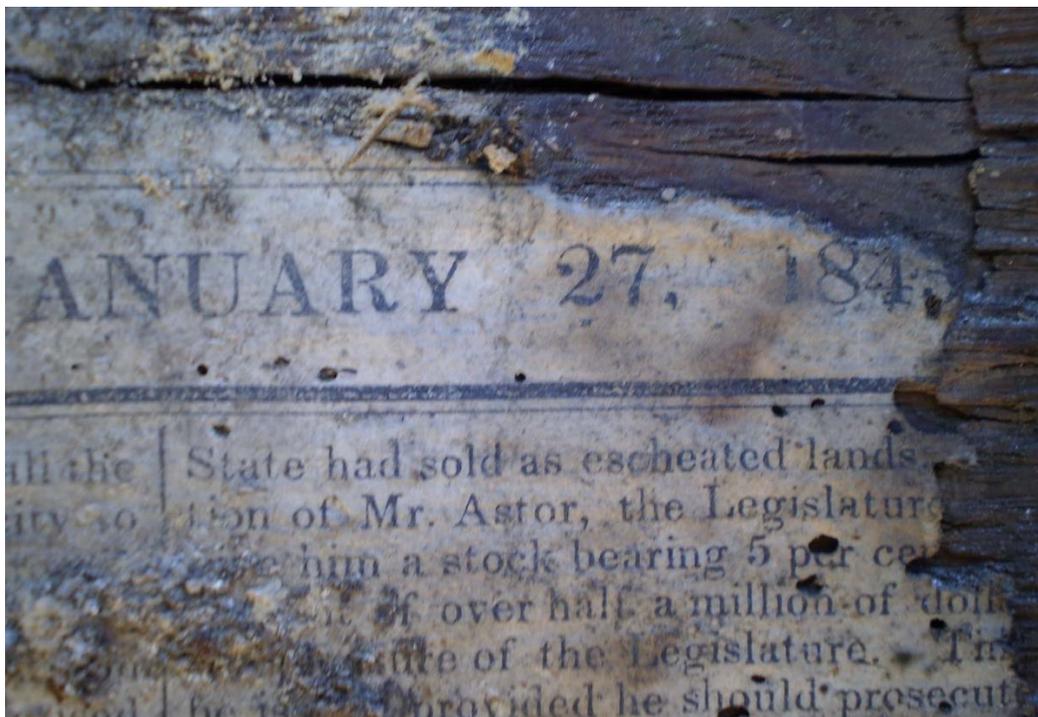
November 2017

Primary activities for the month of November included:

- 1. Brush Control.** November is a prime brush control month. Leaves have fallen from most native shrubs and trees, but often remain on non-native invasive species like Honeysuckle and Buckthorn, making them easier to identify. Some Novembers are wet, but when we get a drier period such as we experienced this month, we can make great strides in cutting and burning brush. The riparian buffer along Haines Creek on the Nelson Prairie saw the most brush removal activity this month. Hundreds of small Box Elder, Honeysuckle and a few other weedy species were selectively removed to make room for higher quality native trees and shrubs to be planted next spring. Our stewards group dragged, piled and burned brush piles there and in Swanson Grove. We also cut and piled brush along the southern tree line in the old nursery area at Afton, ready for more winter brush-pile burning.
- 2. Prescribed Fire.** November is always “iffy” as far as prescribed fire is concerned, but again the milder, drier weather in much of November allowed us to carry out burns in 4 units. Three of these were in the Afton Preserve (11 ac. in SE hillside buffer of the wetland bank, 1 ac. in the SE central prairie, and 2 ac. in the N central short grass hillside) and 1.25 acre in the West sedge meadow at Swanson Grove for a total of 15.25 acres. Any burning we can accomplish in November is a bonus since it is usually too damp or cold most years.
- 3. Seeding.** That’s right, we plant seed in the fall (and throughout the winter) just like Mother Nature does it. We gather seed beginning in late May or early June, and stockpile most of it until late fall and winter. Larger areas we plant with a drop-seeder behind a utility vehicle. Smaller or more difficult areas (like woodlands) get hand scattered by staff and our industrious stewards group. During November, staff seeded a newly prepared portion of prairie in the Haines Memorial Prairie at the Hoppe Preserve, and stewards and staff scattered seed by hand over several acres of the western woodland in Swanson Grove. Seed for the Haines plot had come primarily from the Afton and South Branch prairies, and the seed for Swanson Grove was gathered in the MacQueen and Russell Woods preserves.
- 4. Mussel Research Report.** We tallied all the data gathered during our mussel surveys this summer, and prepared the reports that will be submitted to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, The Endangered/Threatened Species Board, and the Ellipse Mussel Working Group sponsored by the Openlands organization. We examined six sites on five streams in the Fox River watershed portion of the county, and five sites on the South Branch in the Kishwaukee River watershed. We found a total of 891 live mussels during our surveys. There were 17 different species of live mussels in DeKalb County streams, and relict shells of three more. The most common live species was the Mucket, with 522 individuals identified. The least common live species were the Giant Floater and the Fawnsfoot, with only one specimen of each having been identified. Interestingly, we found no live specimens of Ellipse Mussels in the Kishwaukee River, but we found them in all but one of the sites in the five streams that we surveyed in the Fox River watershed. While not common, Ellipse were the most frequently identified mussel in the southeastern segment of the county in the Fox watershed.



This photo of live mussels from Little Rock Creek includes the Creek heelsplitter (rare), the Slippershell (state threatened), and the Ellipse (species of concern).



What's this? A remnant of the Chicago Democrat newspaper from January 1843 that was glued to the logs inside the Miller-Elwood cabin. (Al Roloff's photo files).