

Natural Resources Management Activities

DeKalb County Forest Preserve District

May 2017

Primary activities for the month of May included:

- 1. Weed control.** May is the time where we transition from spraying Reed Canary Grass to Canada Thistle and the other noxious broad-leafed weeds. We continued our Reed Canary Grass spraying in early May, primarily as spot-spraying and clean-up of areas we had previously treated in April at Merritt, Swanson Grove, Prairie Oaks, Afton and the South Branch Prairie. We always miss some the first time through. Mid-month we transitioned to Canada Thistle, weedy Clovers and a few other weeds that are susceptible to Triclopyr, an herbicide that is somewhat specific to several plant families, and relatively non-toxic to many others. The South Branch Prairie, Afton and Merritt have been our primary target sites so far this season. Our stewards helped control Poison Parsnip at several sites by using our special "Parsnip Predator" tool, a modified shovel for shearing the root crown of these invasive pests.
- 2. Planting.** Our stewards were also instrumental in our May plantings. We carried out a "plant rescue" by digging spring woodland plants from a site at Hopkins Park in DeKalb, where a sledding hill will be constructed with excess soil from the (adjacent) new sewage treatment plant. The stewards and staff carefully dug the plants, many of them in flower, with a large root ball of soil, put them in five gallon pots and kept them under shade cloth until the following week, when we transplanted them to the west woodland area at Swanson Grove. There were about a dozen species, including the rare Nodding Trillium. Also at Swanson Grove, our stewards and staff planted many of the sedge meadow and wet prairie plants that we divided and potted in March and early April. We are rapidly restoring the diversity to the sedge meadow remnant, the savanna and the woodland areas at Swanson Grove. Many years we plant lots of trees in the spring - this year not as many trees, more forbs and sedges. Later throughout the summer as they get to transplantable size, we will plant many more rare and uncommon species that we have grown in a nursery.
- 3. Access maintenance.** In order to get our equipment to areas where we do our restoration work, we sometimes need to repair or install trails and culverts. This month we installed a fence (to aid the farmers in determining where and where not to plant a Round-up Ready crop) and cut out overhanging branches along a quarter mile of the "connection" strip of land between Prairie Oaks and Swanson Grove. This kind of work facilitates our restoration projects and keeps the neighbors happy.
- 4. Education and public relations.** As part of our public education and relations activities, Al Roloff teaches several sections of the "Master Naturalist" classes that the University of Illinois Extension Service offers to regional citizens. During May, Al taught the Prairie, Wetland and a Forest segment of the naturalist program. The students, mostly adults, many of them teachers, attend eight weekly four-hour sessions as a beginning to their naturalist studies. Also in May, Al was interviewed by Carl Nelson from WNIJ radio station. Carl is doing a series about the Kishwaukee River which will air sometime in July.



A photo of the rare Nodding Trillium, one of about a dozen species that was part of a plant rescue.



Stewards admire a trailer and pickup truck load of rescued plants that will grow in the Swanson Grove savanna.