

## Natural Resources Management Activities

### DeKalb County Forest Preserve District

August 2017

Primary activities during the month of August included:

- 1. Weed control.** Weed control continues full speed during August, with “clean-up sweeps” through various prairie and wetland units where we have already carried out some spraying, mowing or cutting. Just one or even two passes through a site are never enough to find and treat all the weeds that invade our native plant communities. Some species emerge later than others, some bloom at later stages of the season, some re-emerge after treatment – whatever the reason, we need to return consistently and keep attacking the most recently found invaders. During August, we carried out clean-up sweeps for our main targets: Canada Thistle, Cattail, Giant Reed, and Sweet Clover. At Swanson Grove, we also treated Timothy and Brome Grass that were intentionally planted as pasture grass decades ago in an area where we are restoring a sedge meadow plant community now. There, we used a grass specific herbicide for the third time this season. Repeated treatments, often over several years, are usually required to establish control of some of the worst invaders.
- 2. Seed collection.** Throughout the summer and fall, we increase the number of species of seed collected each month. August saw more and more racks full of Iris, Sweet Flag, more sedges and bulrushes, Prairie Clovers, Golden Alexanders, Leadplant and a dozen or more additional species that ripen this month. As weed control slows down, seed collection increases. This fall or winter, we will plant close to ten more acres of native plant seeds in new prairie, wetland and woodland restorations. In addition, we over-seed in areas where we have treated invasive plants or where we need to increase density or diversity of the plant community.
- 3. Planting.** August is the last full month for planting plugs or potted herbaceous species. We have a couple weeks in September when conditions can be OK, but if the plants don't have a few weeks before frost to “root in” to the soil, they can frost heave and die from root exposure next spring. Our stewards and staff planted more of the high quality uncommon native plants in two sedge meadow sites in Swanson Grove, in the marsh, sedge meadow, wet prairie and mesic prairie in the South Branch Prairie, and in the marsh and propagation beds at the Afton Forest Preserve.
- 4. Wildlife research.** One of our summer interns, Damon Lubekemon, will continue working part time this fall while he attends classes at NIU. One of Damon's tasks is to continue to monitor “snake boards” at four of our preserves that are part of the Smooth Green Snake research project coordinated by Dr. Rich King, noted herpetologist from NIU. Our mussel surveys are proceeding well, with surveys in the Kishwaukee River, Somonauk Creek, Indian Creek and Paw Paw River during August. How many of us knew of the Paw Paw River before these surveys?
- 5. Other stuff.** We met again with the engineer and contractor to resolve minor issues regarding repairs to the water control structures at Afton, we worked with the excavator to repair the access lanes and culverts at Swanson Grove, and we provided a tour of the cabin and South Branch Prairie for the forest preserve committee.



Stewards, interns and students from Sycamore High School help survey mussels in the Kishwaukee.



A rare Ellipse mussel from Indian Creek in southwest DeKalb County.



The rare and beautiful Fringed Gentian was found in bloom at the South Branch Prairie for the first time.



Kayaking has become a common summer activity on the Kish for many county residents.