

## Natural Resources Management Activities

### DeKalb County Forest Preserve District

May 2014

Primary Activities for the month of May included:

1. **Planting.** This year's plantings included hundreds of trees and shrubs, primarily in the forested wetland component of the Afton Wetland Mitigation Bank. Swamp White Oak, Sycamore, Bur Oak, Hackberry, and Walnut were the main tree species planted there. We also included the wetland shrub, Indigo Bush. Our goal was to increase the area and density of trees in this site. One acre of the northern forested component could not be planted because the beavers had dammed the outlet structure and re-routed the water flow. We potted the over 150 of the trees allotted to that site and will plant them in late summer or early fall when the site is more accessible. Also at the wetland bank, we replanted several thousand Water Lilies and Pond Weeds, plus some Arrowhead and Pickerelweed plants. The Water Lilies and Pond Weeds were planted by our summer interns by tossing weighted tubers in to standing water areas from a canoe. The Arrowhead and Pickerelweed root divisions were hand planted in to the mud in shallow standing water. Over several Wednesday mornings, our stewards group completed the landscape planting of woodland plants surrounding the Russell Woods Natural Resources Center.
2. **Weed Control Season.** During May, our weed control season overlaps with the springtime planting season. Reed Canary Grass was our primary target during May, with large infestations that were treated with grass specific herbicide at the Afton Wetland Bank, the South Branch Prairie at the Hoppe Heritage Farm Preserve, the Prairie Oaks Preserve and Potawatomie Woods Preserve. We used a broad spectrum herbicide to continue removing the weed seed bank in the northeast segment of the savanna at Prairie Oaks. The "weed" species that we attempt to control are the aggressive native and non-native species that reduce the density and diversity of our native plant communities. In some of our preserves, our stewards group members continued hand pulling Garlic Mustard and Dame's Rocket, two invasive members of the mustard family.
3. **New Wetland Bank Application.** Terry Hannan and Al Roloff met with our consulting engineer and determined the revisions that would be made to our application, based on the recommendations made by the USEPA and Army Corps of Engineers. We will meet again in mid-June to review these revisions prior to forwarding them to the Corps.
4. **Volunteer Work and Tours.** Early in May we hosted the largest single group of visitors we have had from Kelly High School and surrounding grade schools in Chicago – 130 people including the

teachers! After some initial trepidation, we decided to have the 40 high school students take small teams of grade school students to plant nuts (Walnuts, Hazelnuts and Kentucky Coffee tree seeds) with a trowel. The high school students stepped up to the task and did a great job of being responsible team leaders. The grade school kids loved it – they just don't get that chance to be in open space and surrounded by nature when they live in the inner city (near Midway Airport). Celia Guzman, the lead teacher and organizer of the field trip, was a volunteer for us when she and her husband were students at NIU. She has brought her students herd for a number of years now.



Interns planting Water Lilies at the Afton Wetland Bank.