

## Natural Resources Management Activities

### DeKalb County Forest Preserve District

January 2014

Primary activities for the month of January included:

1. **Brush control.** Winter should be our brush control season. The leaves are off the woody plants, no insects, and the delicate forest floor plants are dormant in the frozen soil. We *should* be cutting lots of Honeysuckle, Buckthorn and Multiflora Rose. We got a start on brush season in December and early January when staff and our Stewards Group cut brush at Knute Olsen Preserve. Staff began burning some of the piles and then....
2. **Snow plowing.** The only good thing about the 3<sup>rd</sup> snowiest January on record is that we had budgeted for an additional snow plow for the northern preserves. And since we have had more snow than Anchorage Alaska during January, we really got a chance to use it. As with any of the myriad of tasks that are required to preserve, protect, restore and *maintain access* to our preserves, we all pitch in when one or another task requires immediate attention or special effort. This goes for keeping the lanes, parking lots and trail heads accessible for the citizens who enjoy the activities that are available to them in our forest preserves during winter months. In a milder year, we would be making good progress in reducing invasive brush infestations. This year, not so much brush removal, more snow removal.
3. **Burn plans.** The dead of winter is a good time to update and prepare “burn plans” for the spring burn season. Our local ecosystems - prairies, woodlands and wetlands – all evolved under conditions of regular fires started by the Native Americans. We have re-established these conditions in order to control invasive plants, enrich the soil, germinate native plant seeds and open the prairie and woodland floor to more sunlight. Burning also provides better conditions for early season herbicide application of invasive species. Best management practices and PDRMA, our insurer, require detailed plans for each unit that will be burned, as well as a record of how the burn was actually carried out and if it occurred according to plan. Safety is always the foremost consideration.
4. **Stewards Group.** Landscape planning for a new look around the Natural Resources Education Center at Russell Woods has been the primary activity of our Stewards Group during January. Our stewards are a very knowledgeable group when it comes to native plants and landscaping. All of them grow native plants, all of them have done landscaping with native plants, and all of them are enthusiastic and interested in helping make the Resource Center be a showcase of native woodland plant design and installation.



The new snowplow in a freshly cleared parking lot at Adee's Woods forest preserve.



A lonely picnic table waits for spring under a thick blanket of snow at Adee's Woods.