

Natural Resource Management Activities

DeKalb County Forest Preserve District

September 2014

Primary activities for the month of September included:

1. Continued invasive species control. Late season invasive species control was carried out at various management units at the South Branch Prairie, the Afton Wetland Bank, and Prairie Oaks Forest Preserve, primarily in wetland and prairie restoration areas. Most herbicide treatments were of Cattails, Giant Reed (Phragmites), Reed Canary Grass and Goldenrods. We sprayed the Goldenrods with a broadleaf herbicide that is particularly effective on members of the Composite family, and we used wick methods to apply glyphosate, a broad-spectrum herbicide, on the other species. We will continue to treat these invasive species until killing frosts stop their growth.

2. Seed collection season. Seed collection swings in to high gear during September and October and becomes one of our primary activities. Our stewards group provides a great amount of additional labor and greatly increases our collected seed volume this time of the year. In addition to our regular Wednesday morning stewards work session, some come out on other days and help with our seed collection. Wetland and prairie species have been our targets this month, with Afton, Prairie Oaks and the South Branch Prairie being our primary collection sites. We will compile a list of species and amount of seed collected at the end of the season.

3. Master Naturalist Training. Al Roloff taught two of the four hour sessions of the Master Naturalist Training sessions that are being carried out in DeKalb County this fall by Peggy Doty and the U. of I. Extension Service. Al taught the prairie class at Afton and the wetland class at the South Branch Prairie. Our forest preserves provide excellent training sites for these kinds of outdoor education programs.

4. Grassland Restoration Network workshop. On September 9, 10 and 11, Al Roloff attended the Grassland Restoration Network workshop held at the Nachusa Grasslands, south of Oregon Illinois. The workshop was targeted to managers of large native grassland tracts. It focused on restoration techniques and allowed for the sharing of current management strategies. Nachusa is at the forefront of experimenting with grassland restoration. The introduction of wild Bison for the first time since 1830 took place at Nachusa this past week. It is discussed in the front page article of the Chicago Tribune for October 8th.

5. Wetland Mitigation Bank Review Team (MBRT) site visit. Representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers, the USEPA, the Illinois EPA, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources made a site visit to the Afton Wetland Bank on September 17th. We provided a tour of the entire site and discussed the challenges of operating and maintaining the Wetland Bank. It was the impression of our staff that, as several of them said, they felt the Wetland Bank “looks great”. In a

follow-up discussion with the MBRT Chairman, they had no recommendations for improvements or amendments.



A gorgeous red Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) stands next to its cousin, the Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) at the Afton Wetland Bank.



A small beetle feasts on the rare native Fen Thistle (*Cirsium muticum*) at Prairie Oaks Preserve. This thistle is a 10 on the Floristic Quality Assessment scale of 0 to 10.