

July 2017. Maintenance and safety checks of buildings and grounds, seasonal mowing, firewood cutting splitting and stacking, storm clean-up, shelter house and toilet cleaning, litter pick-up and disposal, road grading, trail maintenance, equipment maintenance, scheduling shelter rentals and collecting shelter and camping fees, drinking water sampling . Shelter houses and Lodge are used every weekend by scouts, families and other groups. Natural Resource Center Educational Staff teaching school groups / Summer Camps at Russell Woods and making classroom visits. PDRMA Risk Management and Loss Control review and preserve safety in progress for 2016 compliance.



Press Release:

*The Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation Land Acquisition Grant Program has awarded approximately **\$400,000.00** to the DeKalb County Forest Preserve District since 2011 to help purchase **Prairie Oaks, Swanson Grove and the future Nelson Prairie, which was acquired by the Forest Preserve District on June 30** (all part of the Haines Creek Conservation Corridor). This “Conservation Corridor” features a unique diversity of plant communities and animal habitats. Savanna, upland forest, wet woods, streams, marshes, seeps, upland prairie, mesic prairie, wet prairie, dry prairie, sedge meadow, about every native plant community is represented here. The seeps have been restored with the re-introduction of a complex set of native grasses, sedges, rushes, bulrushes and forbs that thrive in each other's company. The rare Red-headed Woodpecker, River Otters, Bald Eagles and many other birds and mammals are seen here more frequently than in any other DeKalb County preserve. There are 2 miles of mowed hiking trails, 1.5 acres of mowed picnic areas with picnic tables, trailside benches and an asphalt handicapped access trail to a beautiful overlook. Land restoration work continues at **Prairie Oaks, Swanson Grove and Nelson Prairie**. These 3 connected forest preserves and one more future forest preserve site along Haines Creek will make up the 2 mile long, 160 acre Haines Creek Conservation Corridor.*

The vision for this conservation corridor was one of the reasons that compelled the Foundation to invest in the first of three acquisitions six years ago, according to Dennis O’Brien, Executive Director. “In 2011 the District approached the Foundation with the idea that preserving those first 43 acres would lead to something larger and it has. The Foundation is impressed with the stewardship work completed by the District and its dedicated volunteers and feels that all three sites are in good hands.”

The Foundation has awarded 172 land acquisition grants to date, protecting a total of over 26,000 acres of wildlife habitat at locations throughout Illinois. Learn more at www.illinoiscleanenergy.org.

Pictured below is one of the many 100 + year old Bur Oaks, Haines Creek sign (Forest Preserve photos) and Immature Bald Eagle (photo by Chuck Christensen) along the Haines Creek Conservation Corridor



Forest Preserve staff place limestone boulders around parking areas at Sycamore and Russell Woods Forest Preserves



Forest Preserve Natural Resource Manager Al Roloff gave the Forest Preserve Committee a "Prairie Tour" at Afton in July



Also as part of the Afton history information to the Forest Preserve Committee.....



Mc Girr family history at Afton...pictured is Kenny Mc Girr, his son and grandkids at an Afton picnic in the late 90's.

Eddie is showing his arrowhead collection of some of the many arrowheads he found while farming at Afton. NOTE: In the photo near the right hand bottom there a couple of buttons that he found that fell off uniforms from German WW2 POW's working on their Afton farm.

PS Kenny also told me where the 1940 bottle of Irish Whiskey is hidden in the Afton barn walls.....no worries it is still there.

Terry

July storm rolls in north of Sycamore.....



.....and with all the rain this Summer the prairie restoration at Sycamore Forrest Preserve is in bloom...hopefully a Fall prairie burn will happen here this year.



Forest Preserve staff and volunteers plants hundreds of native tree and shrubs every year ...pictured is a Sycamore Tree at Sycamore Forest Preserve



There have been many reports of Wild Turkeys in Sycamore...here 3 juveniles (Jakes) are at the front door of the Legislative Center on an early Satiday Morning in July, maybe they wanted to see the “Gobble-torium “? Their mother was right around the corner and they all calmly walked east.....



August 2017- Southern Preserves & Natural Resource Completed Project List- Josh Clark and staff

Maintenance

- 1. Began preparing Afton for the annual Sycamore High School cross country meet. We trim back several of the trails that the course follows in order to make them more accommodating to the runners.**
- 2. Continued cleanup of park areas at Afton. This was started last year as an ongoing project as time allows.**
- 3. Cut back overhanging vegetation along trails at Merritt Prairie.**
- 4. Graded roads at Sanauk Forset Preserve.**
- 5. Added ADA access to Shelter #1 at Sanauk Forest Preserve.**

Natural Resources

- 1. Daily checks and removals of beaver dams. We remove the dams in order to keep the water levels in the wetland banks at the proper levels.**
- 2. Planting of native plant plugs throughout the district.**
- 3. Seed collection throughout the district.**
- 4. Continue to work on the plant propagation garden at Afton. Installed and planted 9 seed/propagation beds. These beds will allow us to collect hard to find seed and also allow us to divide rare plants to be planted in the preserves.**
- 5. Sprayed areas for weeds that were mowed earlier in the season.**
- 6. Cattail and phragmites control in the wetlands at Afton and South Branch Prairie.**

Projects July – August 2017 Bill Prain and Northern FP staff

- Hazard tree removal along trails, lanes and open areas at Potawatomi Woods
- road, shoulder and parking area stabilization, repair at Prairie Oaks, Potawatomi Woods, Russell / Nehring
- Erosion repairs Prairie Oaks
- Sign board repairs at Prairie overlook – Hoppe
- Vehicle and trailer upgrades for insurance compliance
- Mowing
- Pruning along trails and roads at Prairie Oaks, Potawatomi Woods and Wilkinson Marsh
- Sycamore FP debris pick up and boulder placement
- General supply and equipment organization
- Construction assistance for gate supports, signage and bike rack at Sycamore FP
- Administrative Priorities as called for (materials and supply ordering, pick up and delivery)
- Safety investigation reporting and training
- Construction assistance for new open air picnic shelter – Russell Woods
- Welding Contractor consultation for observation deck at Russell Woods
- Eagle project assistance for new bridge stairway at Russell Woods
- Construct new roof for outhouse at Macqueen
- Safety lane compliance for equipment trailer
- Potable /safe water testing for IDPH compliance



Public Star Party

September 2, 2017

Afton Forest Preserve

The Northwest Suburban Astronomers (NSA), in cooperation with the DeKalb County Forest Preserve District, will be hosting a public star party on Saturday, September 2nd, at Afton Forest Preserve,

located at 13600 Crego Road, south of DeKalb, Illinois. Come and let NSA astronomers show you the Planet Saturn, double stars, galactic as well as globular star clusters, our own galaxy, the Milky Way, and our “neighbor”, the Andromeda Galaxy. Club members will be on hand to answer questions on astronomy and telescopes as well.

Dress for evening and bring a flash light covered with red plastic or cellophane (red light helps preserve night vision) and don't forget insect repellent. Please arrive by 7:15. (sunset is at 7:21) so that car headlights don't blind other participants. You are also welcome to bring your own telescope or binoculars. In the event of inclement weather the event will be cancelled. There is no cost to attend and no registration is required.

American kestrels, like many raptors, pose a risk to safe aircraft operations when they use airport environments (Washburn et al. 2011, Dolbeer et al. 2013). Recent information suggests American kestrel populations are declining across their range and concerns for their conservation have been expressed by the ornithological community and state fish and wildlife agencies (Farmer et al. 2006, Bird 2009, Farmer and Smith 2009). Concurrently, there is widespread public interest in issues related to management of raptors. Effective, publicly accepted methods to reduce the hazards posed by raptors, including American kestrels, to aircraft safety are needed.

Live-capture and relocation of raptors is a commonly used method to reduce the hazards posed by these avian species using airport environments (US Department of Agriculture 2005, Guerrant et al. 2013). Although some (unpublished) information is available (McIlveen, et al. 1992/1993, Fukuda and Hallett 2000, Schafer et al. 2002, Guerrant et al. 2013) that suggests live-capture and relocation of red-tailed hawks and other raptors might be effective in reducing raptor-aircraft collisions, scientific evaluations and publication of findings in the scientific literature is essential for the development of effective raptor management methods within airport environments.

Chris Bottom ,Wildlife Biologist USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services, O'Hare International Airport

Pictured are beautiful Kestrel's (Sparrow Hawks) reloctaed to Afton Forest Preserve in cooperation with USDA Wildlife staff project outlined above.....

