



Restoration Status

Of NCCP / NCRMP Identified Priorities

SEPTEMBER 2020

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Executive Summary

In 2014, the Forest Preserves released their Next Century Conservation Plan. This plan set an ambitious goal of restoring 30,000 acres of Forest Preserves lands to ecological health in 25 years. The Forest Preserves began working on that goal in 2015.

This report is intended to provide an overview of the work accomplished toward that 30,000-acre goal between the years 2015-2020. Within you will find introductory and background information on the Forest Preserves approach to meeting the restoration goal, a set of maps that shows where important work has been done, and descriptions of our preserves. Each preserve page has been written to be a standalone page that can be used when focusing on a preserve, whether for sharing with partners, approaching a potential donor, or sharing with constituents or the general public.

The Forest Preserves has pursued restoration according to the precepts established in partnership with the Prairie Research Institute which are based upon their work to incorporate the key goals and outcomes expressed to them by our partner organizations. Those goals are to re-establish healthy ecosystems for the benefit of natural communities, plant and animal species, clean water, and long-term sustainability.

The biggest challenge faced in this five-year period was scaling up restoration projects to meet the acre goal. The Forest Preserves experimented with new strategies and new technologies to increase our typical project size from tens of acres to hundreds of acres. By 2017, we were able to begin projects in this size range and continue to engage in larger restorations within our 30,000 priority acres. Typical results of this work are shown at right and below. Although we do not have funding to conduct bigger projects everywhere we want, we have reached the technical level needed to meet our 25-year goal should funding levels increase.

With this new approach, the Forest Preserves have expanded the acres under restoration from 5,800 to 12,200 acres in just five years. That is 40% of our priority lands under restoration. At our current pace, we can place all 30,000 acres under restoration by 2035. While the full ecological benefits of this work may take more time to be realized, early results are positive.

Typical condition of tree canopies before and after woodland restoration. In the absence of prescribed fire, trees are often unnaturally dense. The resulting heavy shade leads to a cascade of negative ecological consequences.



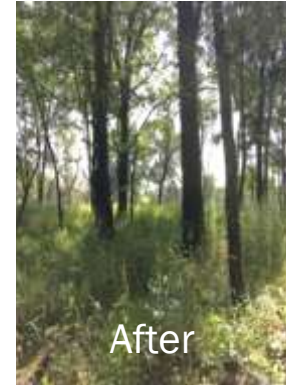
Along the Des Plaines River unrestored oak-maple mesic woodland 96% canopy cover.



Cap Sauers Holding Nature Preserve recently restored oak dry-mesic woodland 55% canopy cover.



Before



After

A typical savanna before restoration in 2015 and after invasive brush removal in 2018. Sunlight was returned to the ecosystem, increasing native plant cover and diversity, improving habitat for birds and other wildlife, promoting rainwater infiltration and water-holding capacity, reducing erosion, and many other beneficial changes.



Restoration work has bolstered populations of our native plants and animals including White Trillium, Black Swallowtail, False Mermaid, Downy Gentian, and Cardinal Flower.



Introduction

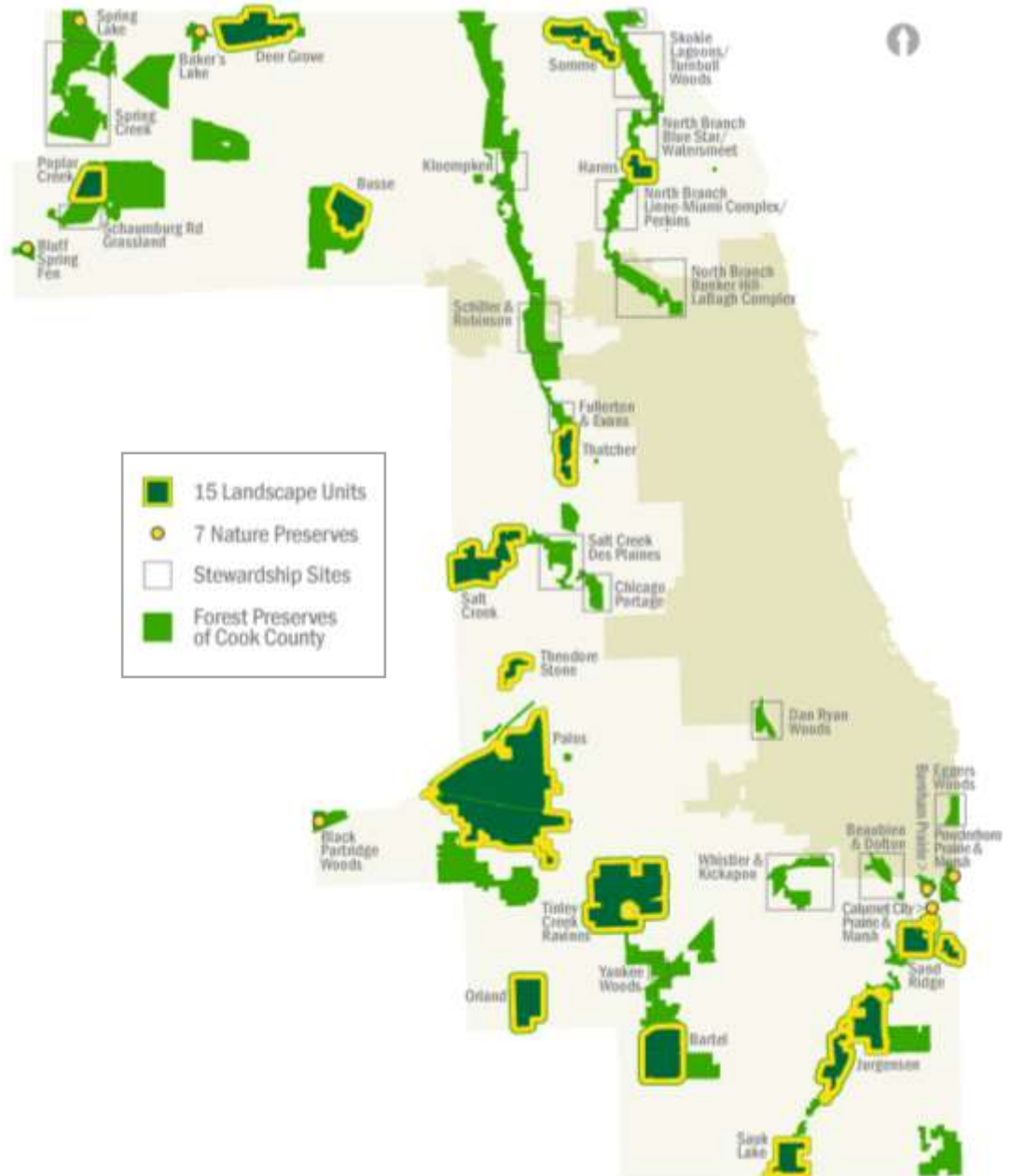
Cranberry Slough Nature Preserve, Joe Occhiuzzo

In 2014, the Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC) completed the Next Century Conservation Plan (NCCP). This plan outlined goals for the forest preserves for the next 25 years. The major land management goal in this plan is to restore 30,000 acres to ecological health by 2040.

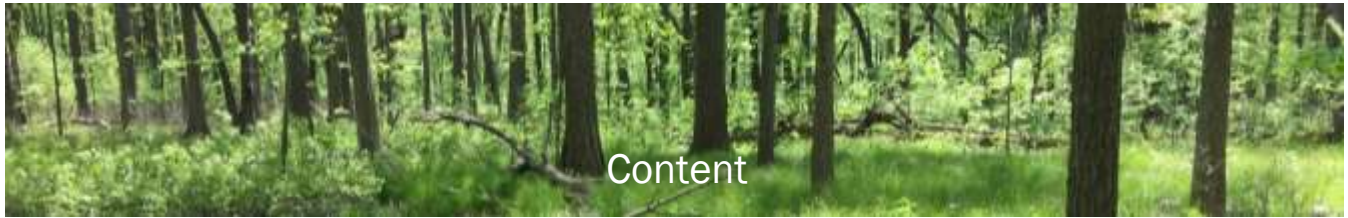
In 2015, FPCC released the Natural and Cultural Resources Master Plan (NCRMP). This plan, assembled by the Prairie Research Institute, describes the critical resources found on FPCC lands and outlines the threats to their persistence. Subsequently, a more detailed plan that prioritized restoration was assembled. This prioritization plan put a fine point on where restoration is likely to be most successful. As part of that plan, 15 priority landscapes were identified and ranked. Seven nature preserves and an additional set of 38 priority stewardship sites were identified outside those landscapes. Together these properties make up the 30,000+ acres FPCC will be working on to meet the Next Century goal.

In 2018, FPCC issued a progress update titled "Restoration Status of NCCP/NCRMP Identified Priorities", which described restoration progress over the three-year period from 2015-2018. This document is the five-year status update on that work and covers years 2015-2020.

The Next Century Conservation Plan defined ecological health as achieving a state-recognized Illinois Natural Areas Inventory quality rank. Knowing that reaching this high standard will take time, perhaps a decade or more, a less rigorous measure of restoration was devised to allow for shorter-term progress reporting. The measure used in this document is the number of acres "under restoration." This is defined as acres that have had major restoration completed - restoration that removes the largest impediment to recovery. Some examples of work at a site that would be considered "under restoration" are: invasive brush removal, restoration of canopy cover and structure, repair of hydrologic impacts, and control of large infestations of invasive herbaceous plants.



Overview Map. Forest Preserves of Cook County. Priority Landscape Units outlined in yellow. Seven Nature Preserves outside of these units are indicated as yellow points. Stewardship Sites are outlined in grey rectangles. All other Cook County Preserves are shaded green.



Content

This document is divided into three parts: the 15 Priority Landscapes, the 7 Nature Preserves outside those landscapes, and the 38 Stewardship sites outside the landscapes. It provides a brief one-page description of each of the priority locations as well as an update on their restoration status. Maps are included that show where major work has been done. The maps show work done prior to FPCC’s renewed restoration effort driven by the NCCP and NCRMP (prior to 2015), work completed between 2015-2018, and work completed between 2018-2020. This document is intended primarily as a quick summary look at our restoration priorities across the 30,000 priority acres. It also serves as a baseline from which to measure future progress toward our 30,000-acre goal.

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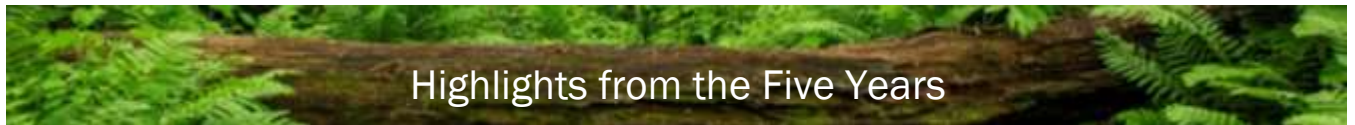


Recent Restoration Work

At the completion of the prioritization process in 2015, FPCC began focusing large-scale restoration work on the highest priority locations identified in the NCRMP plan. Work has been conducted at all 15 landscapes in the past 5 years, with major work happening in the highest ranked units: Palos, Jurgensen, Busse, Deer Grove, and Sand Ridge. Table 1 lists those landscapes and the amount of work happening at each. Work at these locations has involved invasive removal, habitat structure improvements, hydrologic repair, and increased fire application across a total of 16,500 acres. Some landscapes and nature preserves are approaching 100% “under restoration” due to this recent work.

There are seven nature preserves that are disjunct from our 15 priority landscapes that are also restoration priorities. A separate page describes activities at each of those preserves. *Three of these seven nature preserves have reached the 100% under restoration mark.* Additionally, there are 38 preserves under stewardship by volunteers, but outside the 15 landscapes, that are described in this document and are priorities. (Refer to Overview Map)

A note on the maps that accompany each restoration page. There are three colors on the maps: orange, yellow, and green. Orange represents areas that received major restoration prior to 2015 or were in good condition without major restoration. Yellow represents areas that have had major restoration conducted from 2015-2018. Green represents restoration done from 2018-2020. Unshaded areas represent areas that have had no restoration or have had minor restoration but major work remains to be done. So, as a quick guide, all shaded areas have had major restoration and unshaded areas have not. Two caveats to follow: 1) Shading is not intended to indicate quality, but rather areas “under restoration”, 2) In some cases, work was done across years both before and after 2015; a choice was made for which color to use based on when the preponderance of work was done – it is therefore inexact.



Highlights from the Five Years

In the five years since our plans were completed, 6,325 additional acres of FPCC lands have been brought under restoration. Scaling up work has been an important objective to meet our restoration acreage goal. We have engaged in 13 projects larger than 100 acres in size, with the largest contiguous project area being over 2,000 acres. We continue to do work at smaller scales to help us refine how to best conduct effective restoration. Our focus remains on meeting our Next Century Conservation Plan goal of restoring 30,000 acres to good ecological health.

- Four new Nature Preserves and three new Land and Water Reserves were established totaling 2,350 additional acres.
- Added 6,400 acres of new restoration across these priority lands. Now have a total of 12,200 acres under restoration within our 30,000 priority acres.
- Three FPCC Nature Preserves and one landscape have reached 100% “under restoration” (and two other Nature Preserves inside landscapes).
- 16,500 acres have received fire at least once in 2015-2020.
- The Calumet Compact has resulted in \$1.1M new dollars committed to our Calumet preserves.
- 74 preserves have had formal vegetation monitoring completed.
- Our typical restoration process starts with brush removal, followed by tree thinning, then hydrology repairs (erosion, etc), with herbaceous invasive control throughout. When funding allows, we conduct all of these concurrently. Burning, seeding, and other follow up work add to the restoration process.

Summary Tables

Landscape (15)	Pre-2015 Acres	2015-2018 Acres	2018-2020 Acres	Total Acres	Landscape Under Restoration
Palos	1,276	1,628	680	3,584	35%
Jurgensen	52	242	49	342	14%
Busse	24	55	191	270	21%
Deer Grove	227	266	125	617	43%
Sand Ridge	108	167	84	359	46%
Salt Creek	105	206	65	376	25%
Somme	148	104	111	363	50%
Harms	167	27	24	218	64%
Thatcher	34	116	9	159	37%
Sauk Lake	71	97		168	15%
Tinley Creek Ravines	25	11	291	327	8%
Poplar Creek	256	13	5	274	47%
Theodore Stone	81	53	35	168	32%
Bartel	456	566	14	1,036	59%
Orland	959	161		1,120	100%

Nature Preserves (7)	Pre-2015 Acres	2015-2018 Acres	2018-2020 Acres	Total Acres	Nature Preserve Under Restoration
Baker's Lake	3	3		6	16%
Black Partridge Woods	28	47		75	100%
Bluff Spring Fen	45	5	2	52	55%
Burnham Prairie	79			79	100%
Calumet City Prairie		40		40	100%
Powderhorn Prairie	58	22	0.5	80	64%
Spring Lake	78	1	1	80	14%

Volunteer Sites (38)	Pre-2015 Acres	2015-18 Acres	2018-2020 Acres	Total Acres	Stewardship Under Restoration
Beaubien Woods	31		7	38	32%
Bluestar Memorial Woods		13	8	21	15%
Brookfield Prairie	16	7	3	26	58%
Bunker Hill	26	37	12	75	27%
Bur Oak	5		3	8	1%
Busse Woods South*			21	21	3%
Camp Pine Woods			12	12	3%
Cermak Prairie	4	3		7	39%
Chicago Portage	16	16	2	34	94%
Dan Ryan Woods	24	60	9	93	93%
Dolton Prairie	9		1	9	38%
Eggers Woods	29	54	24	107	76%
Evans Field	<0.5	7	1	8	10%
Forest Glen	1	10	4	15	12%
Fullerton Woods			1	5	20%
Indian Road Woods	5		8	13	39%

Volunteer Sites (Continued)	Pre-2015 Acres	2015-18 Acres	2018-2020 Acres	Total Acres	Stewardship Under Restoration
Kickapoo Woods	92		3	95	40%
Kloempken Prairie	84	8	6	99	82%
LaBagh Woods	14	17	23	54	34%
Linne Woods & Prairie	66	4	1	71	47%
McCormick Woods	10	10	1	22	63%
Miami Woods	69	36		104	88%
Perkins Woods	5			5	100%
Robinson Woods	7	27	9	42	51%
Schaumburg Road Grassland	54	110	14	178	36%
Schiller Woods	5	13	2	20	17%
Skokie Lagoons	49	25	5	80	11%
Spicebush		8		8	27%
Spring Creek-Headwaters	371	15	2	388	29%
Spring Creek-South Donlea	61			61	11%
Spring Creek-Galloping Hill	79	16	2	97	18%
Spring Creek-Long Meadow	222			222	46%
St Paul Woods	9	46	12	66	45%
Turnbull Woods		57	6	64	97%
VRC Woods	2	9		11	55%
Watersmeet Woods	33	8	20	62	34%
Waubansee	7			7	70%
Wayside Woods	7	8	<0.5	16	64%
Whistler Woods		13	22	35	25%
Yankee Woods	57			57	48%
Zoo Woods	17			17	31%

Large projects outside of the 30,000 Priority Acres

Preserve /Project	Acres	Work	Project Purpose	Funding
Portwine	320	Buckthorn removal, Tree thinning, Herb invasive control, hydro valves	Habitat work for vertebrates	Tollroad Mitigation
Crabtree	80	Brush and cattail removal around large wetlands and intervening uplands	Habitat for Birds	IDNR Grant
Paul Douglas	100	Planned Project 2021 start	Vegetation restoration / habitat	Mitigation Partnership



Prairie



Sedge Meadow



Landscape Units

Cinnamon Fern, Thornton-Lansing Road Nature Preserve



River Otter, Monarch Butterfly on Swamp Milkweed, Turtlehead Deer Grove Wetland, Grey Treefrog on Mayapple, and Pileated Woodpecker

Palos

FPCC's highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located near Palos Park, within the southwest portion of the county, and is over 10,000 acres in size. The oak dominated landscape, with its rolling morainal topography, contains: dry mesic woodlands, mesic woodlands, dry-mesic savannas, sedge meadows, emergent wetlands, and even a bog. However, Palos suffers from a proliferation of honeysuckle throughout, patches of black locust, and to a lesser degree herbaceous invasive species such as reed-canary grass. Recent restoration activities have been predominantly within the Cranberry Slough Subunit, which contains Cranberry Slough Woods, Spears Woods, Willow Springs Woods, and Pioneer Woods, as these are the highest ranked preserves. Work has also been done within the Sag Valley Subunit at Cap Sauers Holding Nature Preserve, Swallow Cliff Woods, McClaughrey Springs Woods, and Paddock Woods. Additionally, smaller projects were conducted at Palos Fen Nature Preserve, White Oak Woods, and Maple Lake. Since 2015 at Cranberry Slough, 497 acres of invasive brush have been removed. The results have been visually and ecologically stunning, revealing hills and wetlands formerly invisible behind walls of brush. Vegetation recovery has been excellent, with formerly rare species like Michigan lily, Indian tobacco, and fire pink appearing across the area. At Cap Sauers Holding, FPCC's largest Nature Preserve, 1/3 of the site has been placed under restoration and 1/3 of the acreage at Swallow Cliff Woods is now under restoration. Hydrologic repairs have been done at damaged locations along Crooked Creek, which runs through the northeastern portion of the Palos preserve system.

In total 2,308 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Map 1. Palos Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

FUNDING FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, FPCC Tree Mitigation Fund, Forest Preserve Foundation Grants (REI, private funders, Anonymous Donor), Nazurus 501c3, Palos Restoration Project Volunteers, Friends of the Chicago River (ChiCal River Fund, Illinois Clean Energy Foundation, Private Funder), Friends of the Forest Preserves (Illinois Clean Energy Foundation, Bobolink Foundation, Conservation Corps), FPCC staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? With 90% of the Cranberry Subunit under restoration, completing the remaining 10% will be a priority. Once complete, our attention will turn to the Sag Valley Subunit. FPCC is concurrently formulating a plan for the Red Gate Subunit should funding be identified.

STATUS 3,584 acres / 10,200-acre unit
= 35% under restoration

Jurgensen

FPCC's 2nd highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located in Thornton, Chicago Heights, and Glenwood, within the southeast portion of the county. Work has been focused in the highest-ranked portion of this landscape which includes Jurgensen Prairie Nature Preserve and the eastern sector of Thornton-Lansing Road Nature Preserve. These sites include two small but very high-quality wet prairies, and black oak savannas with sedge meadows embedded throughout in swales. The prairies were formerly impacted by the encroachment of trees and brush, shrinking their open area to half of what it was 40 years ago. The savanna and swales were heavily shaded by a cohort of trees that established after fire suppression began 40 years ago. The highly diverse grass and forb layer, for which the site is famous, was reduced to a few small patches. Through a series of grants from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in partnership with Illinois DNR, Chicago Park District, The Nature Conservancy, the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission, and Audubon Great Lakes, a series of contracts were let to remove invasive brush and trees, and treat herbaceous invasives. In winter 2016-18, 130 acres of brush and trees were removed at Thornton-Lansing Nature Preserve, within the finest portion of the preserve. In 2018-19, an additional 32 acres of savanna and prairie were restored at Thornton-Lansing to expand the restoration area westward and help connect the two prairie remnants on site. Ten acres of trees and brush were removed from the Jurgensen prairie in 2017-18 to expand the prairie boundaries. Another 70 acres of brush and small trees were removed at Wampum Lake Woods Nature Preserve in 2015-18. An additional 11 acres of brush were removed north of Wampum proper in 2019. The structural change at all these sites is apparent with a much more open mid-layer and canopy layer. Vegetational recovery has been excellent with significant increases in multiple plants of concern populations and new populations discovered. Wampum Lake was dedicated as an Illinois Nature Preserve and a 100-acre addition was added to Thornton-Lansing Nature Preserve.

In total 291 acres have received restoration since 2015



Map 2. Jurgensen Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

FUNDING Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant (GLRI), Save Our Great Lakes (SOGL) grant, The Nature Conservancy/Calumet Compact (3 additional SOGL grants, GreenCorps), FPCC Match, Friends of the Chicago River (Private Funder), FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Friends of the Forest Preserves (Conservation Corps), Wampum Lake Volunteers.

WHAT'S NEXT? An additional 33 acres of invasive brush and reforestation will be removed, and prairie restored at Thornton-Lansing in 2021. We have received funding to conduct restoration of 180 acres of woodlands and floodplain at the Sweet Woods/Brownell Woods preserves south of Wampum Lake along Thorn Creek, and subsequently will be pursuing funding for western Thornton-Lansing and Jurgensen Woods restorations. A goal is to fully reconnect two restored prairies by removing remaining invasive trees and brush along the south edge of Thornton-Lansing Nature Preserve.

STATUS 342 acres / 2,400-acre unit
= 14% under restoration

Busse

FPCC's 3rd highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located in Elk Grove Village and Rolling Meadows, within the northwest portion of the county. At this site, northern flatwoods, mesic woodlands and forest are intermingled in a generally flat landscape where subtle changes in topography create wetland pockets, low wet woods, and drier upland forest. Among many interesting ecological features, Busse's amazing collection of 37 species of sedges makes it unique in the FPCC's preserve system. The preserve has pockets of buckthorn and other woody invaders as well as a flush of pole sized maple trees that are shading and degrading the site's rich botanic understory. Restoration has been ongoing in the highest ranked portion of this landscape which includes Busse Forest Nature Preserve. Tree thinning and invasive brush removal work began in Busse Nature Preserve in the winter of 2016-17 and has continued each year through 2020. This work has led to the restoration of 142 acres. Herbaceous invasive species control was conducted in the 2016 growing season and has also continued through the summer of 2020. Volunteers and contractors began work south of Higgins Rd. in 2016 and combined work has resulted in 35 acres of restoration. The vegetational recovery at Busse has been excellent with the expansion of sedges and forbs throughout and increased flowering of state-listed plants.

In total 246 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Northern Flatwoods



Map 3. Busse Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

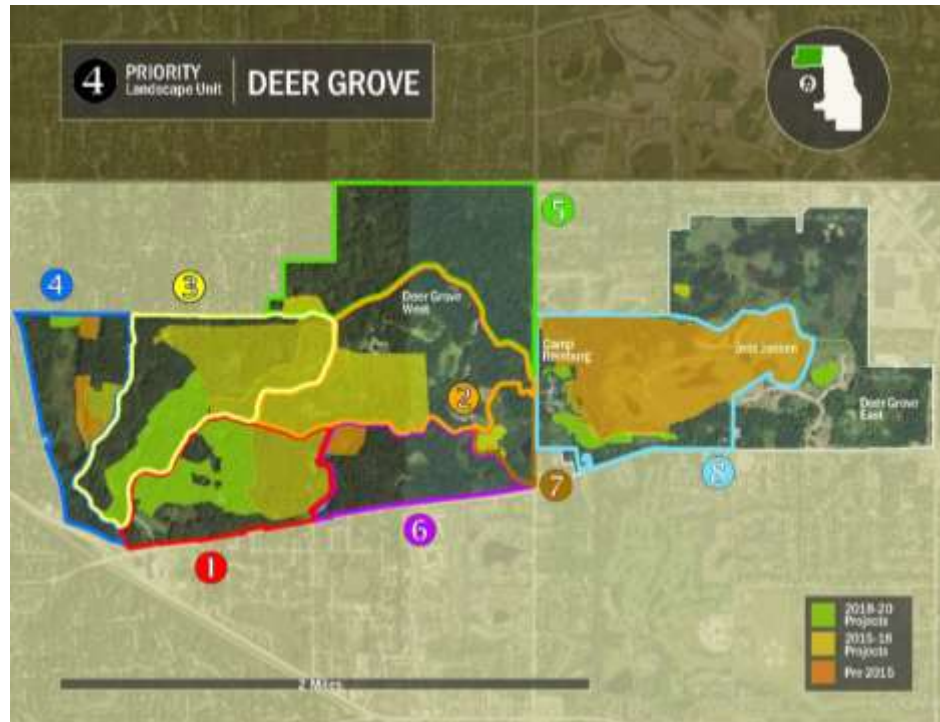
FUNDING FPCC Tree Mitigation Fund, Nicor agreement, Friends of Busse Volunteers, Chicago Botanic Garden (EcoLab Grant), FPCC staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? This work will continue over the next two years using existing funding dedicated to Busse. We anticipate completing an additional 150 acres in the nature preserve in the next two years. Future plans are to first complete work west of the grove road and then move into the woodlands east of the road. This landscape unit contains over 1,000 acres of quality woodlands and wetlands.

STATUS 270 acres / 1,270-acre unit
= 21% under restoration

Deer Grove

FPCC's 4th highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located in Palatine, Barrington, and Deer Park within the northwest portion of the county. Work has been initiated in some of the highest ranked portions of this landscape in the center of Deer Grove Nature Preserve. These restoration areas contain dry-mesic, mesic, and wet woodlands with morainal depression wetlands embedded throughout, as well as floodplain forest at the bottom of steep ravines, and a large prairie restoration on the east end. The preserve is impacted by buckthorn, Japanese barberry, Oriental bittersweet, winged euonymus, and a variety of shade-tolerant pole-sized trees that are limiting light to the ground layer. In addition to the impacts described above, a suite of wetlands were being drained by artificial ditching; creating down-cuts into Salt Creek which runs through the project area. In 2015, a 240-acre restoration project was initiated in the highest ranked portions of the preserve. In the winters of 2015-18, invasive brush and trees were removed to restore a healthier woodland system. In winter 2017-18, wetland impairments were repaired, with ditches closed and down-cuts reinforced. This work was expanded by an additional 100 acres in 2020. This project is funded by O'Hare expansion mitigation monies and overseen by Openlands. Work has been conducted in partnership with the Deer Grove Natural Area volunteers, who have been restoring parts of the site for the last 20 years. Prior to this work, Openlands restored wetlands, prairie, and open woodlands on the east side of Deer Grove, in an area now registered as the Jens Jensen Wetland and Woodland Land and Water Reserve.



Map 4. Deer Grove Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

In total 391 acres have received restoration since 2015.

FUNDING Openlands (O'Hare Modernization Mitigation Account (OMMA) Fund), Deer Grove Natural Area Volunteers, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, FPCC Staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? Completion of the 100-acre expansion of this work is the immediate goal; 75% complete as of this report. If funding from the proposed Quentin Road project is received, an additional 350 acres will be restored west and east of the road.

STATUS 617 acres / 1,440-acre unit
= 43% under restoration



Buttercups, Savanna

Sand Ridge

FPCC's 5th highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located near South Holland and Calumet City, within the southeast portion of the county. The preserves in this landscape are almost entirely made up of dune and swale, a sand-based system of linear dunes with intervening linear wetland swales. This system is known for high biodiversity and unusual botanic communities. Almost all of the landscape suffers from an invasion of buckthorn and honeysuckle brush and a heavy overgrowth of black oak, black cherry, sassafras, and silver maple. Work has been

ongoing in Sand Ridge Nature Preserve; past projects include brush removal in the prairie, tree thinning in the black oak savannas of the dunes, and invasive herbaceous control in the wetland swales. In 2017, invasive trees were removed from a large wetland at the north end of the nature preserve by staff. At Green Lake Woods, dune and swale restoration has been in progress since 2015 beginning with expansion of a large opening and feathering of the surrounding savanna, and removal of invasive trees and shrubs in the highly diverse northern-most swales. In 2017, 32 acres were contracted for restoration along two dune-swales, bringing recent totals to 66 acres. Similarly, invasive brush removal was conducted across 56 acres of dune and swale at Wentworth Woods in 2015-2017. A project was also conducted in 2017 to remove 30 acres of brush at Michigan City Road savanna, located north of the Sand Ridge Nature Center, by our Conservation Corps. Based on early assessments, vegetational response has been excellent. Much of this work has been funded by grants from US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and GLRI.

In total 251 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Map 5. Sand Ridge Landscape. Sand Ridge Nature Preserve outlined in RED. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

FUNDING US Fish and Wildlife Service (GLRI Grants), The Nature Conservancy/Calumet Compact (SOGI Grant, GreenCorps), FPCC Match, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Friends of the Forest Preserves (Conservation Corps), Sand Ridge Stewardship Volunteers, FPCC staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? Most of Sand Ridge Nature Preserve has had initial restoration completed. Green Lake Savanna is contracted to have all invasive brush removed by 2022, and we anticipate invasive brush will be removed across Wentworth Woods in that same time frame. Tree work remains to be done in ½ of Green Lake and most of Wentworth Woods. If funding can be obtained, next steps are to complete tree structural restoration of the southern ½ of Green Lake Savanna, Wentworth Woods, and Michigan City Road Savanna. Invasive work will continue at Sand Ridge Nature Center.

STATUS 359 acres / 780-acre unit
= 46% under restoration



Wetland Swale

Salt Creek

FPCC's 6th highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located along a band running west to east from portions of Westchester and Western Springs, through LaGrange and LaGrange Park, within the central portion of the county. This landscape is composed of prairie, savanna, oak woodlands, and floodplain forest in a series of preserves adjacent to Salt Creek. Most of the restoration work in this landscape since 2015 has focused on Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve, Bemis Woods, and Salt Creek Nature Preserve. At Wolf Road Prairie, from 2015-2019, 36 acres of buckthorn and dogwood were removed from the prairie, and 5 acres of trees were thinned in the southern savanna. At Bemis Woods 38 acres of invasive brush were removed. At Salt Creek Woods in 2018, 20 acres of heavy buckthorn was removed from the northwest corner and 20 acres of trees were thinned in the center area. From 2015-2020 an additional 76 acres of brush was removed and 150 acres of invasive herbaceous plants and brush were treated. Additionally, work has begun at Possum Hollow Woods in part due to the re-start of volunteer stewardship workdays in 2017, and the deployment of Conservation Corps teams.

At Wolf Road Prairie, from 2015-2019, 36 acres of buckthorn and dogwood were removed from the prairie, and 5 acres of trees were thinned in the southern savanna. At Bemis Woods 38 acres of invasive brush were removed. At Salt Creek Woods in 2018, 20 acres of heavy buckthorn was removed from the northwest corner and 20 acres of trees were thinned in the center area. From 2015-2020 an additional 76 acres of brush was removed and 150 acres of invasive herbaceous plants and brush were treated. Additionally, work has begun at Possum Hollow Woods in part due to the re-start of volunteer stewardship workdays in 2017, and the deployment of Conservation Corps teams.

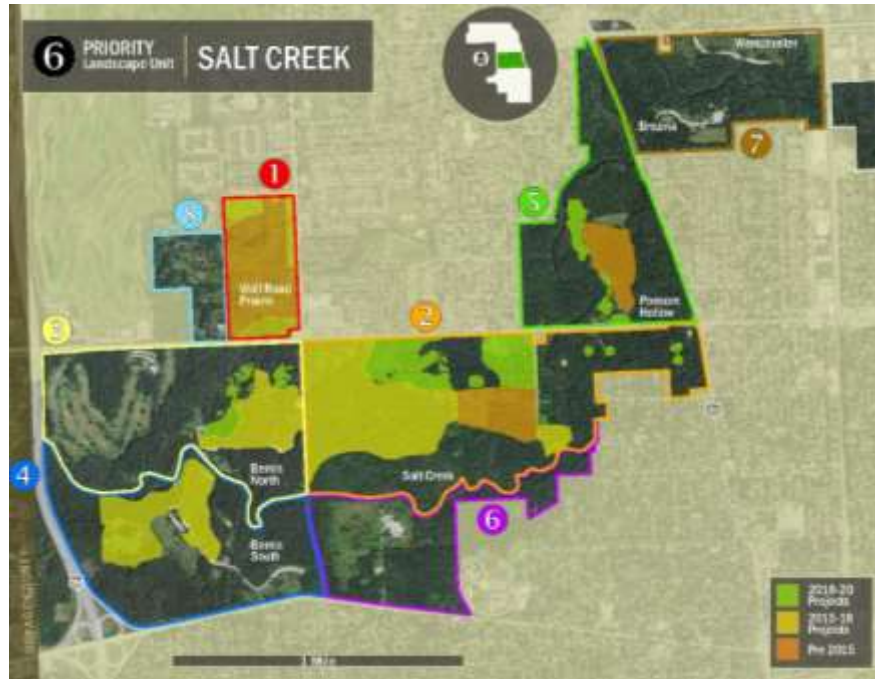
In total 271 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Black Soil Prairie



Ephemeral Wetland



Map 6. Salt Creek Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

FUNDING FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Volunteers/Save the Prairie Society Grant (Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation), Salt Creek Greenway Grants, Volunteer Stewardship, Shedd Aquarium Volunteers, FPCC Staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? Invasive brush in the northeast portion of Salt Creek Woods will continue using staff resources. Invasive work at the highest quality portions of Bemis Woods is anticipated for 2021-2023. Continued buckthorn removal along the north edge of Salt Creek in Salt Creek Woods is needed but as of yet unfunded.

STATUS 376 acres / 1,500-acre unit
= 25% under restoration

Somme

FPCC's 7th highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located in Northbrook, within the northeast portion of the county. This landscape is composed of prairie, savanna, oak woodlands, floodplain forest, and wetlands. The major issues at these locations have been invasive brush, overabundance of trees, and degradation of prairies and savannas by shade and fire suppression. An active volunteer stewardship program at Somme Nature Preserve, Somme Prairie Grove, and Somme Woods, had made great progress before 2015. Since 2015, at Somme Prairie Nature

Preserve a strong push has resulted in the major structural and invasive issues being addressed, mainly through two grants designed to remove invasive brush and reforested trees. Since 2015, 22 acres of reforestation were removed, and 30 acres of buckthorn infestations removed and treated. The North Branch Restoration Project volunteers are collecting local prairie seed for reintroduction to the site. Additionally, a drainage that runs through the preserve and empties into the west fork of the Chicago River was repaired. Wetland plant seeds were collected by stewards, grown by the Chicago Botanic Garden, and planted by volunteers where ground was disturbed. Somme Prairie Grove, with a 40-year volunteer effort, has had its major issues addressed and is generally on a maintenance and improvement track via the stewardship team there. At Somme Woods, past work has been in the western ½ but more recently a large group of volunteers has made excellent progress removing invasive brush and pole trees in the eastern ½ of the preserve. Somme Woods has seen 150 acres of invasive brush and small tree removal via a strong volunteer push. At Chipilly Woods, 63 acres of woodland was restored with invasive brush, trees, and herbs removed to create open light areas to stimulate plant recovery and provide habitat for turtles. Recovery at these locations is ongoing but results are very promising.



Map 7. Somme Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

In total 215 acres have received restoration since 2015.

FUNDING US Fish and Wildlife Service (Two GLRI Grants, Chicago Botanic Garden Match, FPCC match), FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Somme/North Branch Restoration Project Volunteers, Friends of the Chicago River (Private Funder/Habitat Funding), Friends of the Forest Preserves (Conservation Corps), Shedd Aquarium Volunteers.

WHAT'S NEXT? Volunteers will over-seed the recent tree removal and brush project area at Somme Prairie Nature Preserve. Volunteers have Somme Prairie Grove under restoration across all acres; there is more to do but the big issues are addressed. Volunteers and Conservation Corps have made great strides with brush and small tree removal across much of Somme Woods, continued progress is expected to bring the entirety of this woodland into restoration. Maintenance of gains at Somme and expansion of restoration at Chipilly Woods will be a focus of restoration moving forward.

STATUS 363 acres / 730-acre unit
= 50% under restoration

Harms

FPCC's 8th highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located in Skokie and Glenview, within the northeast portion of the county. This landscape is composed of oak woodlands, flatwoods, and forested floodplain along the north branch of the Chicago River. Despite the urbanized landscape around Harms, the preserves retain excellent examples of those natural communities as well as healthy populations of rare native plants. Invasive brush is a major problem across this landscape. However, there are extensive areas of high quality that qualified the eastern sector for dedication as the Harms Flatwoods Nature Preserve in 2016, and the western sector as Harms Woods Nature Preserve in 2019. Volunteers have been working on restoration at both sites for over 30 years, working in the areas shown in orange and beyond. FPCC crews have been assisting volunteers at Harms Flatwoods in invasive brush removal. Since 2015, FPCC has added contract and staff brush removal at Harms Flatwoods covering 20 acres.

At Harms Woods Volunteers and Conservation Corps have removed 28 acres of invasive brush and trees.

In total 51 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Flatwoods



Map 8. Harms Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

FUNDING FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, staff, and Harms / North Branch Restoration Project Volunteer. There is the potential for mitigation funds to be used at both sites in 2021-2023.

WHAT'S NEXT? Volunteers and staff will continue to remove invasive brush and over-seed poor performing areas. Due to extensive brush removal by volunteers over 30 years, if funding is made available, all of the remaining invasive brush in the Harms Landscape could be cleared in 2-3 years.

STATUS 218 acres / 340-acre unit
= 64% under restoration

Thatcher

FPCC's 9th highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located in Maywood, Forest Park, Melrose Park, and River Forest, within the central portion of the county. This landscape is composed of oak woodlands, floodplain forest, and small areas of prairie and savanna along the Des Plaines River. Thatcher Woods contains excellent examples of floodplain forest and is known for its diverse woodland spring flora. Volunteers have been conducting restoration at this site for over two decades. Grand Army of the Republic Woods and Thomas Jefferson Woods have similar natural communities to Thatcher, and good restoration potential. Since 2015, FPCC contractors have removed brush and thinned trees over 60 acres at Thatcher Woods. At the Grand Army of the Republic Woods, 11 acres of invasive brush were removed and treated, and 9 acres of invasive herbaceous plants were treated.

In total 125 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Virginia Bluebells, Floodplain Forest



Map 9. Thatcher Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

FUNDING FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Thatcher Woods Savanna Restoration Project Volunteers, FPCC Staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? Continue tree thinning near railroad tracks and continue invasive removal in floodplain.

STATUS 159 acres / 435-acre unit
= 37% under restoration

Sauk Lake

FPCC's 10th highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located in Park Forest, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, and Steger within the south portion of the county. This landscape is within the Tinley moraine and is composed of oak woodlands on the high ground, floodplain forest along Thorn Creek, Sauk Lake (an artificial lake), and former agricultural lands. Much of the invasives at the site are barberry, multiflora rose, and buckthorn. In 2016-19, 32 acres of invasives species were mowed in the large woodlands in the center of the preserves and re-sprouts treated. Ten acres of herbaceous herbs were treated in 2020. Prescribed fire has been reintroduced to the site with burns in 2015, 17, 18, and 19 across most of the remnant acres. Sauk Lake is an artificial lake created by the damming of Thorn Creek. It functions poorly as a lake and restoration of this area to floodplain will be a long-term goal.

In total 97 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Riparian Woodland



Map 10. Sauk Lake Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

FUNDING FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, FPCC Staff, Forest Preserve Foundation (Enbridge).

WHAT'S NEXT? The remnant areas of this site require further invasive control, which will be conducted if funds are available. Invasive brush is patchy so large areas can be effectively treated by removing just the scattered patches. This landscape will be a focus for future GLRI opportunities. On the horizon, deconstruction of Sauk Lake and reconstruction of the Thorn Creek floodplain will be a dramatic improvement for the ecology of this landscape.

STATUS 168 acres / 1,150-acre unit
= 15% under restoration

Tinley Creek Ravines

FPCC's 11th highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located at the junction of Orland Park, Palos Heights, Oak Forest, Midlothian, and Crestwood, within the southwest portion of the county. This landscape is composed of oak woodlands, floodplain forest, emergent wetlands, prairie, and old fields from past agricultural use. This landscape is a patchwork of remnant and impacted agricultural lands with two artificial lakes embedded within. The remnants are typically oak woodlands with small pocket wetlands and floodplains, all along Tinley Creek, which bisects the site. The remnants within this landscape suffer from invasions of Asian bittersweet, common buckthorn, multi-flora rose, among others. The former agricultural lands are of low diversity and will require improvements. Past restoration has been patchy, with attempts to save quality wetland pockets, and push fire through the woodlands. FPCC entered into an agreement with Oak Lawn in 2018 to restore a 500-acre portion of this landscape at its highest priority location (in the very southwest of the landscape) as part of mitigation for a future water pipeline installation. The project involves removing invasive brush and trees from the woodland and floodplain as well as removing invasive brush and overseeding with prairie species in the old field. This project was initiated in winter 2020 and 315 acres were completed. FPCC also removed invasive brush around critical wetlands, and small areas with rare plants in Bur Oak Woods, Camp Sullivan, and Elizabeth Conkey Woods. Elizabeth Conkey Woods is scheduled to become an Illinois State Nature Preserve in September 2020.

In total 302 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Map 11. Tinley Creek Ravines Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

FUNDING FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, FPCC Staff, Oak Lawn Water Main Mitigation

WHAT'S NEXT? Completion of the 500-acre restoration is the immediate goal. A proposal has been submitted for an additional 70 acres of restoration east of the 500-acre unit. We will focus efforts wherever possible on restoring the creek-side remnants that cover over 1/2 of this large landscape. Continued site monitoring by volunteers at Bur Oak Woods.

STATUS 327 acres / 3,880-acre unit
= 8% under restoration

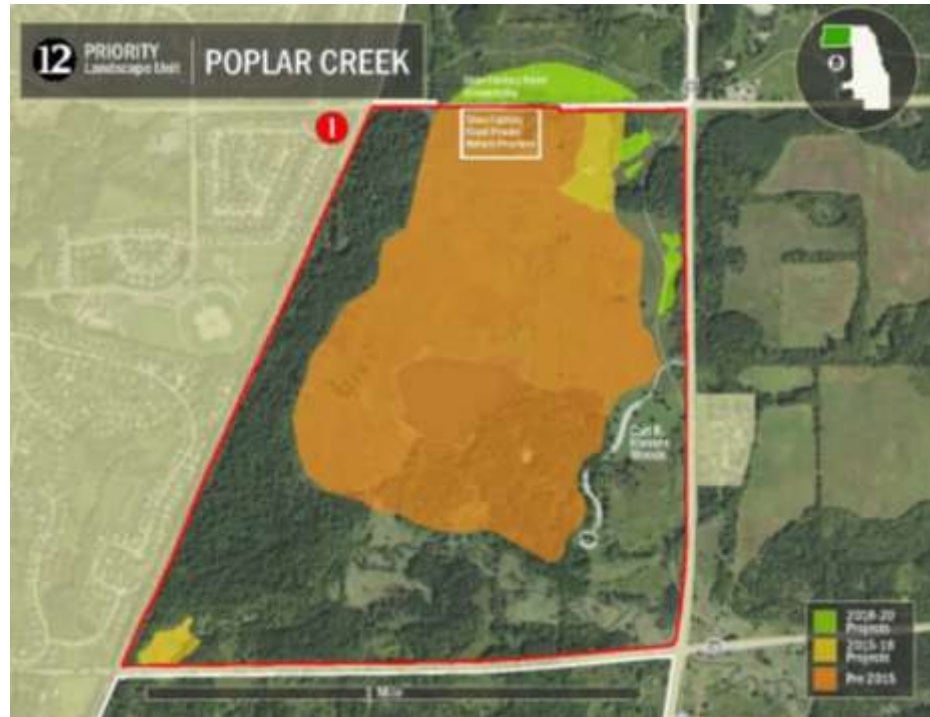


Pennsylvania Sedge, Oak Woodland

Poplar Creek

FPCC's 12th highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located between Elgin, Streamwood, and Hoffman Estates, within the northwest portion of the county. This landscape is composed of prairie, savanna, fen, and oak woodlands. Shoe Factory Road Prairie Nature Preserve anchors the landscape with a small but regionally important gravel hill prairie remnant of very high quality and diversity. This prairie was once overgrown with brush and small trees that were since removed and treated by volunteers over a 25-year period. A prairie reconstruction was started in the 1990s by volunteers to expand and protect the gravel hill remnant. This reconstruction continues to expand in both size and quality. A 40-acre woodland has also been under restoration for decades. Since 2015, FPCC has assisted in this landscape by providing invasive plant control along the east side of the hill and tree thinning in the savanna adjacent to the prairie. Also, 24 acres of invasive trees and brush were removed east of the prairie to remove a source of invasives and expand the prairie – volunteers are working to seed and restore this work area. Invasive plants were removed from a small fen remnant to restore that rare, high-diversity plant community.

In total 18 acres have received new restoration since 2015.



Map 12. Poplar Creek Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

FUNDING FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Forest Preserve Foundation (Oberweiler Foundation, 3 Grants), Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards Volunteers, Audubon Great Lakes (Conservation Corps), FOTFP Field Organizer, FPCC Staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? Volunteers will continue to over-see the recent brush removal project area and conduct invasive control and FPCC will continue assisting with invasive control and fire. We are proposing to dedicate the prairie reconstruction as an Illinois Land and Water Reserve to protect Shoe Factory Road Prairie nature preserve and surrounds.

STATUS 274 acres / 580-acre unit
= 47% under restoration



Phlox and Golden Alexanders, Gravel Hill Prairie

Theodore Stone

Theodore Stone is FPCC's 13th highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located in Countryside and Hodgkins, within the central portion of the county. The Theodore Stone complex, which includes Theodore Stone Forest, Sundown Meadow, and Arie Crown Forest, contains prairie, savanna, and oak woodland. The land was shaped by glaciers and water and contains hilly topography dissected by shallow ravines. Invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle are the major threats, particularly in the woodlands. Additional threats include common herbaceous invaders and some issues related to past land use. At Theodore Stone Forest, volunteers have been restoring and reconstructing prairie for nearly three decades. In 2017, FPCC contractors removed 11 acres of brush and trees to expand the eastern boundary of the prairie. In 2018-19, volunteers restored 5 acres along the west edge of the preserve and FPCC contractors removed 5 acres of brush from the woodland along the north edge. At Sundown Meadow, weekly workdays have resulted in 18 acres of brush removed from the woodland. Volunteers, with support from Conservation Corps, contractors, and staff, are continuing restoration of woodland and prairie at Sundown Meadow and Arie Crown Forest.

In total 88 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Map 13. Theodore Stone Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

FUNDING FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Des Plaines River Valley Restoration Project Volunteers, FPCC Staff, Greencorps (Conservation Corps).

WHAT'S NEXT? Reconstruct prairie along the east and south boundaries of Theodore Stone Forest, by removing reforestations and invasive brush, and reseedling. Continue woodland and prairie restoration at Sundown Meadow and Arie Crown Forest.

STATUS 168 acres / 530-acre unit
= 32% under restoration

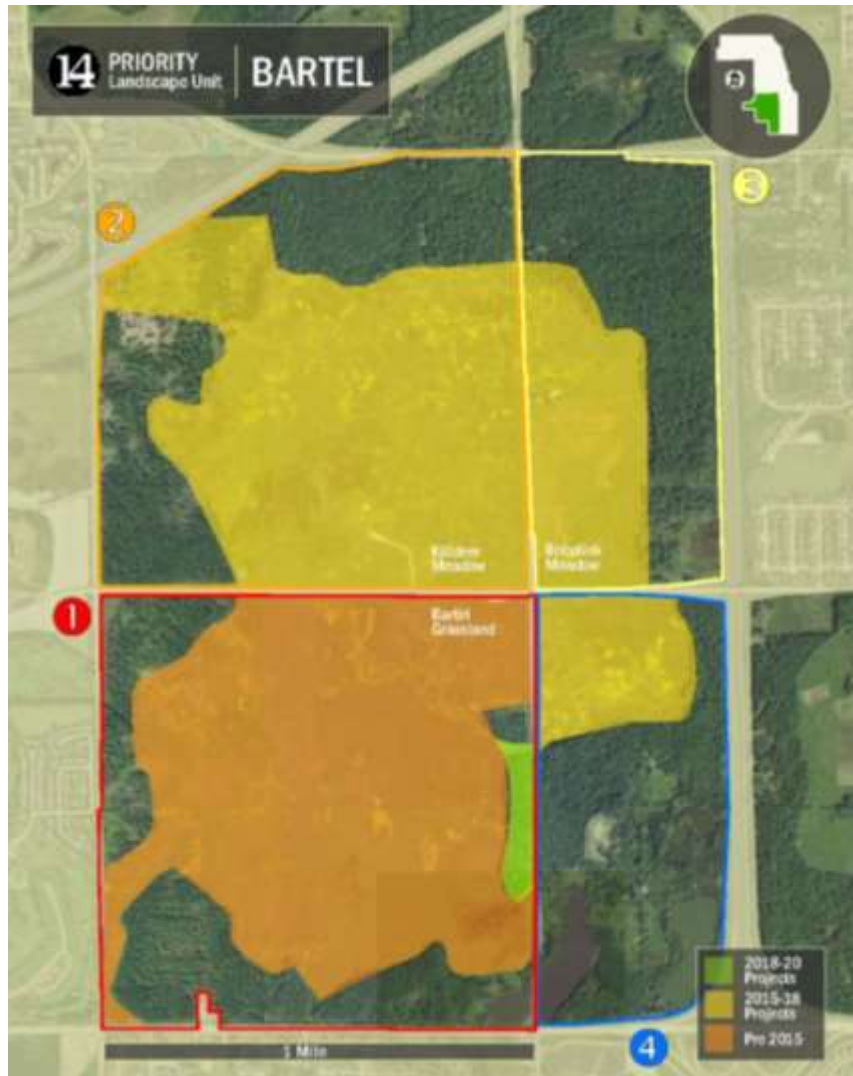
Bartel

FPCC's 14th highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located near Tinley Park and Matteson, within the southern portion of the county. This landscape is composed of prairie, wetlands, and reforestations. It is best known for its large congregations of prairie and wetland birds in the spring and summer. In the past decade a partnership was formed with Openlands, Audubon, the US Army Corps, and the Bartel Volunteers to reconnect the highly partitioned Bartel preserve. This work was carried out over a number of years beginning in 2005 and the preserve now has a 430-acre open grassland, registered with the state as the Bartel Land and Water Reserve. To the north, Openlands initiated and managed a large reconstruction of prairie and wetland. This area, while still developing, contains excellent examples of reconstructed prairie and wetland plant communities. As of 2017, it is now registered with the state as the Bobolink Meadow Land and Water Reserve. This project expands habitat for grassland and wetland birds, making the complex a site of statewide value. FPCC has contributed to these projects by providing burns and managing herbaceous invasives at Bartel. FPCC has recently assumed management responsibility for the entirety of the landscape.

In total 580 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Wetland



Map 14. Bartel Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

FUNDING Openlands (O'Hare Modernization Mitigation Account (OMMA) and FIM Mitigations), FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Friends of Bartel Grassland Volunteers, Audubon Great Lakes (Conservation Corps), FPCC Staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? Continued management of invasive herbs, prescribed burns, supplementation with native seeds and plugs. Monitoring of birds is being conducted jointly by FPCC ecologists and the Bird Conservation Network.

STATUS 1,022 acres / 1,750-acre unit
= 59% under restoration

Orland

FPCC's 15th highest priority landscape for restoration based on the NCRMP assessment. It is located within Orland Park, in the southwest portion of the county. This landscape is composed of prairie reconstruction, savanna, wetlands, and a small pine planting. Originally a farm, the property was purchased by FPCC and reforested in part. In 2007, a plan was created by Openlands, Audubon, FPCC, US Army Corps, and others to expand remaining open fields by removing planted trees and allowing water to collect in low places. The vision was to create an open grassland and wetland complex that supports a healthy bird community. Since that time, prairie seed was added in phases, intensive invasive control was conducted, and the site has been managed mainly as a prairie by FPCC, partners and volunteers. Since 2015, FPCC ecological contractors and volunteers have been engaged in intensive invasive management across the site in an attempt to control the invasives left in the soil after many years of being fallow. We expect this reconstruction will require invasive control throughout the landscape for a number of years to come. The site is registered as an Illinois Land and Water Reserve for its large populations of grassland birds. In 2019, volunteers initiated a native shrub establishment program. Also in 2015, in partnership with the Illinois Tollway Authority, a newly acquired 160-acre parcel south of Orland proper was put under restoration (yellow shading Map 15). The goal here is to convert the agricultural field to a prairie and wetland reconstruction – that work is nearing completion and FPCC intends to enroll it as an Illinois Land and Water Reserve. Agricultural drainages were naturalized and prairie and wetland seeds and plant plug were installed in 2015 and 2016.

In total 1,120 acres have received some level of restoration since 2015.



Prairie, Savanna, and Wetland



Map 15. Orland Landscape. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading. Numbering follows NCRMP restoration priority ranks.

FUNDING US Army Corps Sec 206 & 506 Ecosystem Restoration Programs, I-90 Tollway Authority Mitigation Funds, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Orland Grassland Volunteers, Audubon Great Lakes (Conservation Corps), FPCC Staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? Continued invasive control of woody and herbaceous plants throughout and possibly supplemental seeding. This site has substantial needs for invasive control particularly callery pear and birds-foot trefoil. In 2020-21, FPCC will take on management of the southern 160-acre parcel currently managed by an ecological contractor as part of a wetland mitigation project.

STATUS 1,120 acres / 1,120acre unit
= 100% under restoration



Nature Preserves

Bluff Spring Fen Nature Preserve, Kris DaPra



Long-eared Owl, Great Spangled Fritillary, Red Oak Acorns, Butterfly Milkweed, and Coyote

Baker's Lake Nature Preserve

This Nature Preserve is located in Barrington, within the northwestern portion of the county. This preserve is composed of a lake with associated uplands. An unusual nature preserve, this site was dedicated for its large population of rare marsh birds rather than for its botanic quality. FPCC does not own the entirety of the lake and shares some of the shoreline with private landowners. In the southwest corner of the lake, a stewardship leader has been working on buckthorn removal in the uplands adjacent to the lake to reduce invasive cover and improve the condition of this area. Much of our management of the site has focused on the bird habitat. FPCC constructed artificial nesting roosts on a small island in the center of the lake. These roosts once hosted a variety of marsh bird species during the breeding season. Currently, most of the roost is inhabited by cormorants. Our plan is to disassemble the roosts to discourage cormorants then re-install them to attract other marsh birds once again. This may be a cyclical management strategy. We have recently engaged with a local watershed planning group to discuss larger water quality and water management issues with neighbors and other constituents.

In total 3 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Map 16. Baker's Lake Nature Preserve. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, FPCC staff, Baker's Lake Volunteers

WHAT'S NEXT? Volunteers will continue to expand the restoration area southwest of the lake as well as continue re-sprout and other invasive control. As described above, reinvigoration of the roost sites will get underway starting with removal of platforms. This work may begin as early as 2021.

STATUS 6 acres / 37 land acres of 157 acre-FPCC Nature Preserve = **16% under restoration** (76% of the preserve is the lake)



Great White Egret Nesting Habitat

Black Partridge Woods Nature Preserve

This Nature Preserve is located in Lemont, within the southwestern portion of the county. This preserve contains oak woodlands, seeps, and mesic forests, with a small creek running through it. It retains an excellent remnant character with a very diverse plant community. Volunteers have conducted stewardship here for more than 25 years.

Since 2015, nearly 30 acres of invasive brush were removed by contractors and staff from woods along the creek and adjacent hillsides. This work helped restore the rare seep communities that support uncommon biota, such as skunk cabbage and pawpaw. Additionally, other invasives such as garlic mustard were removed across 17 acres. The entire preserve is under restoration.

In total 47 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Map 17. Black Partridge Woods Nature Preserve. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Conservation Corps, Palos Restoration Project Volunteers, FPCC Staff, NRPA I Heart My Parks Grant.

WHAT'S NEXT? Restoration of Black Partridge Woods is substantially complete. We anticipate projects will be conducted by volunteers to help a former homestead area to recover. In some areas, canopy thinning would further improve the quality of the site. We will continue to spot treat small invasive patches and apply fire. Buffer habitat south of the preserve is being restored to expand suitable habitat.

STATUS 75 acres / 75-acre preserve
= 100% under restoration



Oak Woodland

Bluff Spring Fen Nature Preserve

This Nature Preserve is located in Elgin, within the northwest portion of the county. This landscape is composed of prairie, savanna, sedge meadow, and fen. This preserve has had volunteer work since the early 1980s. FPCC obtained ownership in 2006. Over the forty years of management, this preserve has been transformed from an overgrown remnant into a healthy natural system. Prior to 2015, Bluff City Materials Inc., FPCC and the Illinois State Water Survey worked together to design and install a system to send stormwater safely past the fen and on to Poplar Creek. Since 2015, a variety of projects have been undertaken. Re-seeding and invasive tree and invasive herbaceous plant removal was conducted on 12 acres along the south edge of the property through a partnership with the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Friends of Bluff Spring Fen Volunteers, and FPCC. Six acres of invasive trees were removed through a clean energy grant. FPCC and volunteers continue to improve this site through invasive treatment, connection of high-quality pockets, and application of prescribed fire.

In total 7 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Map 18. Bluff Spring Fen Nature Preserve. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING Illinois Nature Preserve Commission Funds, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Friends of Bluff Spring Fen (Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation Grant), Friends of Bluff Spring Fen Volunteers, FPCC staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? Continued invasive control in problem areas, potential acquisition of land to the northwest, and expansion of restoration into the buffer area to the east of the nature preserve to protect the fen and prairie.

STATUS 52 acres / 95 acre preserve
= 55% under restoration



Prairie and Fen

Burnham Prairie Nature Preserve

This Nature Preserve is located in Burnham, within the southeast portion of the county. This landscape is composed of prairie, savanna, and emergent wetlands. Located along the banks of the Grand Calumet River, this site has a long history of degradation and misuse. However, in partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers, much of that degradation has been reversed. A low point in the bank of the river that allowed polluted waters to flow into the preserve during flood events was raised to keep that damaging water out. Invasive plants have been removed in the quality remnant portions of the preserve. Cottonwood trees, buckthorn, willows, and common reed and cattail stands were removed from the margins to ensure the interior was protected. In damaged areas, native seed and plant plugs were installed to speed recovery. Much of the heavy lifting for this project was done prior to 2015, but intensive follow up work has extended into 2020. Two grants received in 2020 will ensure invasive follow up continues and any remaining pockets are eradicated.

In total 0 acres have received new restoration since 2015.

(USACE funded the restoration of two adjacent buffer areas totaling 56 acres.)



Prairie and Wetland



Map 19. Burnham Prairie Nature Preserve. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING USACE 206 Grant, IDNR Coastal Management Program Grant, The Nature Conservancy/Calumet Compact (SOGI Grant), FPCC Match, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund.

WHAT'S NEXT? Continued herbaceous invasive control via SOGI and Coastal grants, application of prescribed burns, and protection of the preserve and adjacent lands from new invasion of weeds.

STATUS 78.5 acres / 78.5-acre preserve
= 100% under restoration

Calumet City Prairie Nature Preserve

This Nature Preserve is located in Calumet City, within the southeast portion of the county. This preserve is composed of prairie and wetlands. Conveyed to FPCC in a mitigation settlement, this preserve was suffering from a heavy invasion of cattails, purple loosestrife, common reed, and reed-canary grass. Invasive control was initiated in 2009 at a few key locations using EPA settlement funds. Thanks to a combination of GLRI grants and FPCC funds, intensive site-wide restoration was conducted at a high level beginning in 2015. Now the site is in good condition with a much-reduced level of invasive work continuing yearly.

In total 40 acres have received restoration since 2015.

FUNDING USEPA Mitigation Fund, The Nature Conservancy/Calumet Compact (SOGL Grant), FPCC Match, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund.



Map 20. Calumet City Prairie Nature Preserve. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

WHAT'S NEXT? Continued invasive control and prescribed fire will be applied to the site as needed. Purple loosestrife continues to be a looming threat and will require vigilance to keep in check.

STATUS 40 acres / 40-acre preserve
= 100% under restoration



Prairie

Powderhorn Prairie & Marsh Nature Preserve

This Nature Preserve is located in Chicago and Burnham, within the southeast portion of the county. This preserve is composed of dune and swale, an unusual physiographic feature found along the southwestern rim of Lake Michigan, which consists of long linear sand dunes, with long linear wetlands in between them. Powderhorn Prairie and Marsh Nature Preserve contains excellent examples of sand prairie, savanna, and emergent wetland. This preserve has had a volunteer presence for over 15 years. Many of this preserve's needs have been addressed in the last five years, with tree thinning in savannas, removal of invasive cottonwoods and invasive brush, end-to-end treatment of wetland invasives, and thinning of buttonbush in wetlands. By partnering with NRCS and the IDNR-Coastal Program and others, we have been addressing each. However, further treatment of wetland invasives, and hydrologic repair is still needed. A hydrologic study was completed in 2018 to determine the best way to repair impacted wetlands and the lake. A large grant has been awarded to accomplish the goals of restoring normal water levels and facilitating vertebrate movement between preserves (through Audubon, GLC, NOAA, IDNR). Since 2015, 15 acres of trees were thinned, brush has been thinned in the northern portions of the preserve and within swales totaling 20 acres, and purple loosestrife, reed-canary grass, common reed, and cattail infestations have been treated across all wetland acres.

In total 22 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Betony, Sand Savanna



Map 21. Powderhorn Prairie and Marsh Nature Preserve. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (GLRI Grants 2015-2020), Illinois DNR Coastal Management Program Grant, NOAA-GLC-Audubon Great Lakes Grant, Friends of the Forest Preserves (SOGL Grant), The Nature Conservancy/Calumet Compact (SOGL), FPCC Grant Match, Calumet Stewardship Volunteers, FPCC Habitat Enhancement / Shoreline Funds.

WHAT'S NEXT? Hydrologic improvements have been designed and implementation will occur in 2021-22. With hydrologic repair, there should be a decrease in invasive re-establishment. In the meantime, invasive control will continue in wetlands including removing overabundant brush and treating stubborn invasives such as purple loosestrife, common reed, and cattails.

STATUS 80 acres / 125-acre preserve
= 64% under restoration

Spring Lake Nature Preserve

This Nature Preserve is located in Barrington Hills, within the northwest portion of the county. This preserve is composed of sedge meadow and oak woodlands. Its main feature is a natural peat-bottomed lake that receives water from Spring Creek. The preserve has extensive degradation from past land use practices, mainly agriculture, but more recently the influx of polluted waters from adjacent developed lands. Some major issues are reed-canary grass infestations in sedge meadows and buckthorn in wet and upland portions of the preserve. Despite these impacts, there are some areas of high quality sedge meadow and marsh embedded within the larger preserve. The creek still provides habitat for aquatic insects and native fish. Prior to 2015, much work was done to improve high quality pockets. Since 2015, 2 acres of buckthorn were cut, 17 acres of re-sprouts treated, and 33 acres of reed-canary grass were treated. Recently the Fox River Crew, a conservation corps group created in partnership with the Bobolink Foundation, Friends of the Forest Preserves, Citizens for Conservation and Lake County Forest Preserves (Barrington Greenways Initiative) has been working at the preserve to help address conservation issues. Additionally, a renewed presence of stewardship volunteers has been hosting stewardship workdays.

In total 2 acres have received restoration since 2015.

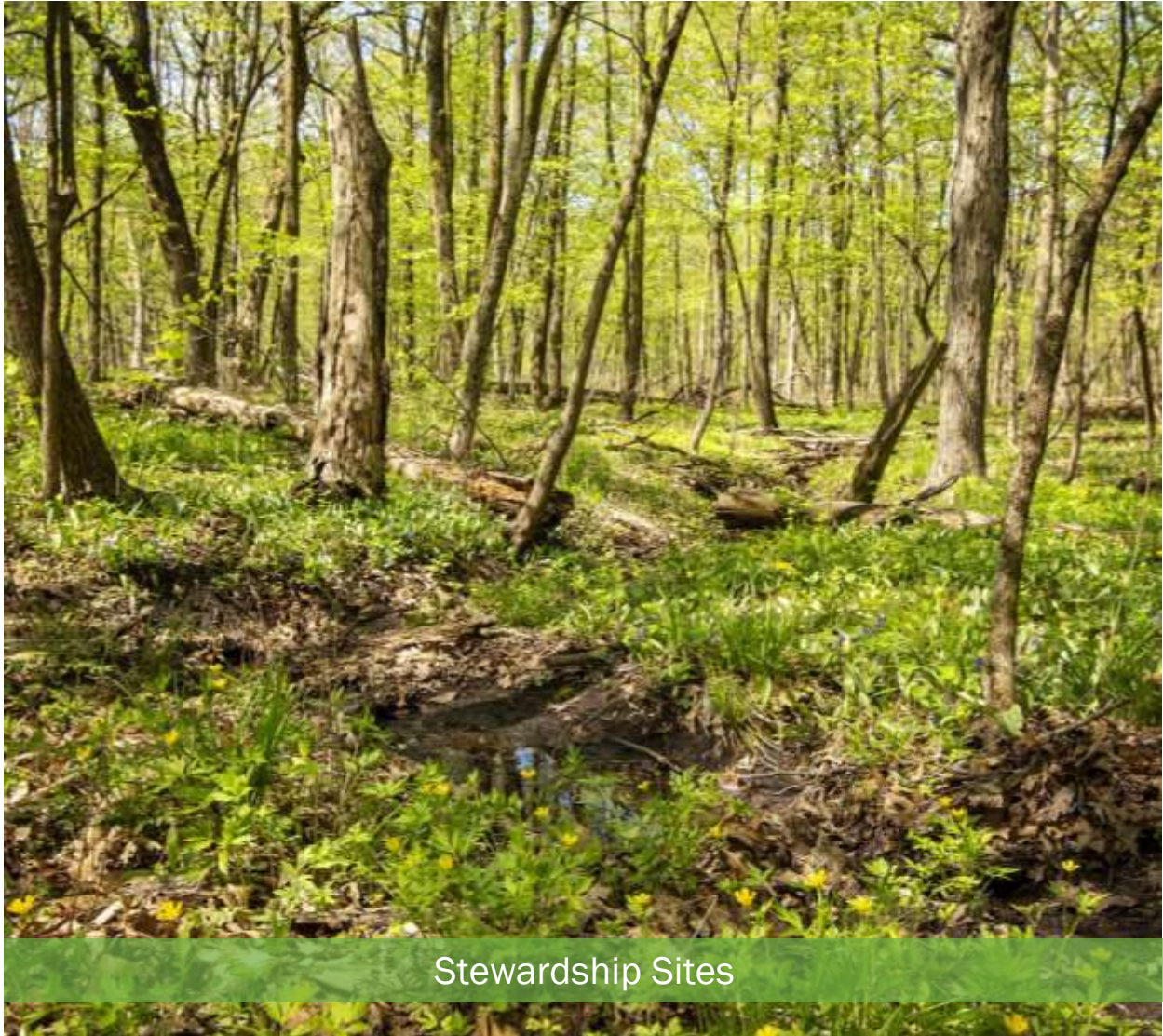


Map 22. Spring Lake Nature Preserve. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING FPC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Forest Preserve Foundation (Oberweiler), Friends of the Forest Preserves (Bobolink Foundation, Fox River Conservation Corps Crew), Citizens for Conservation.

WHAT'S NEXT? The Fox River Crew and stewardship volunteers, in combination with some contractor work, will continue to work on the invasive infestations so pervasive at the site. Work is planned to remove mature buckthorn trees. Correcting damaging water inputs is a future challenge for the site.

STATUS 80 acres / 560 acre preserve
= 14% under restoration



Stewardship Sites

Buttercup in Woodland, Kris DaPra



Red-headed Woodpecker, Prairie Lily, Little Wood Satyr, Skunk Cabbage, and Beaver

Beaubien Woods & Dolton Prairie

FPCC priority volunteer stewardship sites for restoration. These two sites are in the Calumet region, in the southeast portion of the county. Beaubien Woods is within the City of Chicago and Dolton Prairie is in Dolton, and both are along the Little Calumet River. Beaubien Woods is generally flat and sandy with wetlands, prairie, and black oak woods. A large portion of the site is made up of recreational areas such as mowed picnic groves, trails and a fishing lake in the center of the site (Flatfoot Lake). Railroad tracks bisect the site in a northwest-southeast fashion. The US Public Land Survey indicates that Beaubien Woods was a mosaic of marsh, wet prairie and timberland in the early nineteenth century. The main threats to the site are invasive herbaceous weeds and over-shading in savanna and woodland pockets. Ecological restoration has focused on three prairies in the northwest, southwest and southeast corners of the site, respectively, which contain the best natural areas within the preserve. Recent restoration includes removal of invasive brush in a degraded woodland along the north end, installation of native shrubs to replace exotic shrubs removed, and control of wetland herbaceous invasives in the three prairie units and wetlands. Dolton Prairie is a small remnant wet prairie surrounded by an urban matrix. The eastern 10 acres is the highest quality, with the western 15 acres being composed of formerly impacted land with an industrial use history. The prairie is of good quality but has the typical wetland invasives which have been under management. Recent restoration activities include volunteers and interns removing invasive brush along the west edge of the wet prairie to expand this remnant and control of wetland herbaceous invasives across the remnant wet and wet-mesic prairies. The general strategy has been to work east to west engaging in woody and herbaceous removal.

In total 5 new acres have received restoration since 2015.

FUNDING Calumet Stewardship Volunteers, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund/Shoreline Fund,



Map 23. Beaubien Woods–Dolton Prairie. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

Field Museum, Chicago Community Trust-Our Great Rivers, Friends of the Forest Preserves (Conservation Corps), Morton Arboretum (USFS, Illinois Urban Forest Restoration Grant).

WHAT'S NEXT? Beaubien will continue as a stewardship site in partnership with the Field Museum with work focused mainly on expansion of prairie edges to increase habitat. Dolton Prairie is recently without a steward but work continues using Conservation Corps and ecological contractors with maintenance of the wet prairie remnant portion of the site and a gradual expansion to the west to recover marginal lands.

STATUS

Beaubien: 38 acres / 120 acre unit
= 32% under restoration

Dolton: 9 acres / 24 acre unit
= 38% under restoration

Kickapoo & Whistler Woods

FPC priority volunteer stewardship sites for restoration. These two sites are in the Calumet region, in the southeast portion of the county. Kickapoo Woods is at the junction of Riverdale, Harvey, and Dixmoor and Whistler Woods is in Riverdale; both are along the Little Calumet River. Kickapoo Woods is generally dominated by oak woodlands along both sides of the river and has a prairie remnant in the northeast corner. Some of the woodlands are reforestation. It contains a large picnic grove with a model airplane flying field along the east edge of the preserve. The main threats to the site are invasive shrubs, herbaceous weeds, and over-shading in savanna and woodland pockets. Ecological restoration has focused on improving the prairie (which has been mainly steward-led with Conservation Corps assistance) and improving the woodlands along the east bank of the river. Recent restoration includes continued removal of invasive brush in the degraded reforestation area east of the prairie remnant; removal of invasive herbaceous species in wet and mesic parts of prairie remnants and prairie restoration areas; removal of invasive white poplars along east end of prairie, and control of lesser celandine in riparian woodland gullies south of parking lot. Whistler Woods is a wooded preserve adjacent to the Joe Louis Golf Course. As with much of the Calumet region, this site has an industrial past with some areas being used for river dredging. FPC reforested much of the area in the 1950s. A remnant woodland is located in the northwest of the site. Extensive training and stewardship has occurred at the site in recent years and it has proven to be a very good location for training volunteers. Recent restoration activities include removal of invasive brush and trees in the woodland north of the parking lot (the yellow polygon on the map), and removal of invasive brush and prairie plant seeding in the southeast corner adjacent to the railroad tracks, and a woodland seeding south of the river.

In total 38 acres have received restoration since 2015.

FUNDING Calumet Stewardship Volunteers, FPC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Friends of the



Map 24. Kickapoo Woods–Whistler Woods. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

Chicago River (National Environmental Education Foundation Grant), Friends of the Forest Preserves (NFWF Chi-Cal Centennial Volunteers, Conservation Corps), Faith in Place-IDNR Coastal-Donnelley Foundation, Field Museum (Sally Mead Hands Foundation), FPC staff

WHAT'S NEXT? Kickapoo will be managed to improve condition and diversity across existing restored areas and expansion of the prairie to the east. Also, continued restoration of wooded areas east of the river moving from north to south. At Whistler Woods, work will continue southward along the east edge to expand habitat and westward along the river's edge building off the work done in the woodland there.

STATUS

Kickapoo: 95 acres / 230 acre unit
= **41% under restoration**

Whistler: 35 acres / 140 acre unit
= **25% under restoration**

Dan Ryan Woods

FPCC priority volunteer stewardship site for restoration. This site is in the Calumet region, in the southeast portion of the county. Dan Ryan Woods is wholly within the City of Chicago. The site lies within the glacial lake plain physiographic region of northeast Illinois. The west edge of the preserve is part of the “Blue Island” or Park Ridge moraine. The east portion is glacial lake bottom. Extrapolations from U.S. Public Land Survey data estimate that this site exhibited woodland and open savanna tree densities in the early nineteenth century. The natural areas at Dan Ryan are a mix of woodland and savanna structure in both upland and lowland topographic areas. The lowland areas consist of wet woods or mesic-wet swamp white oak savannas, while on the moraines mesic oak-hickory woodlands dominate. Where upland and lowland meet, shallow slopes and ravines occur that are prone to erosion issues. Over half of this site is currently devoted to recreational use, much of it north of 87th street. Ecological restoration has included removal of invasive brush from remnant woodlands, especially in the south half of the site, control of woodland herbaceous invasives, such as Japanese knotweed, lesser celandine, winter creeper, some revegetation from seed on site has begun recently. In 2019-2020, five acres of invasive brush was removed from the remnant flatwoods east of Longwood Ave

In total 69 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Map 25. Dan Ryan Woods. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING Dan Ryan Woods Volunteers, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Friends of the Forest Preserves (Chicago Conservation Leadership Corps, Calumet Corps).

WHAT'S NEXT? Dan Ryan will continue as a stewardship site with maintenance and improvement of previous restoration areas as well as continued movement southward along the southeast woodland.

STATUS 93 acres / 100 acre unit
= 93% under restoration

Eggers Woods

FPCC priority volunteer stewardship site for restoration. This site is in the Calumet region, in the southeast portion of the county. Eggers Woods is within the City of Chicago and sits immediately west of the Indiana state line. The site lies within the glacial lake plain physiographic region of northeast Illinois, with some remaining dune and swale features. Eggers Grove is a mosaic of woodland, marsh, savanna and prairie underpinned by sandy soils typical of sites near Lake Michigan. There are also recreational areas that are not managed as natural areas. U.S. Public Land Survey notes from the early nineteenth century indicate that the eastern portion of Eggers Grove contained tree densities and plant assemblages indicative of a “forest” or “woodland.” These same historic records indicate a more open, savanna-like structure towards the west of the site. A large marsh in the southeastern part of the site was once connected to the current Wolf Lake but is now separated by a former Nike missile site. The wetland swales harbor many native plant species and are threatened by purple loosestrife, reed-canary grass, common reed, and aggressive native woody species. The large woodland areas and savannas are threatened by many woody invasive species such as common buckthorn, glossy buckthorn and non-native honeysuckle as well as non-native herbaceous species such as garlic mustard and lily-of-the valley. Ecological restoration has focused on herbaceous invasive control in the quality woodland and later expanded into the marsh and swales. Through a partnership with NRCS, restoration has been intensive across the site and includes removal of invasive brush from all remnant woodlands, tree thinning, garlic mustard removal, herbicide control of wetland invasives in all remnant wetlands and canopy tree thinning in the central woodland. In 2019, a water control system was constructed to help modulate water levels in the marsh which will allow for a more natural shoreline, vegetation, and wildlife habitat; 12,000 native plugs were installed.

In total 78 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Map 26. Eggers Woods. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, USDA-NRCS (GLRI, Grants 2015-2020), The Nature Conservancy /Calumet Collaborative (SOGL), IDNR Coastal Management Program Grant, Audubon Great Lakes (Wildlife Conservation Society), Field Museum Staff, Calumet Stewardship Volunteers.

WHAT'S NEXT? Eggers Woods will continue to see restoration over the next few years including native plant installation in the marsh margins, small areas of thinning of trees near parking lots, and continued herbaceous invasive control, including common reed and cattail control along the periphery of the marsh.

STATUS 107 acres / 140 acre unit
= 76% under restoration

Yankee Woods

FPCC priority volunteer stewardship site for restoration. Yankee Woods is located between the municipalities of Tinley Park and Oak Forest. Yankee Woods lies on the Tinley Moraine which lends a sloping, upland topography to most of the site. The soils are moderately well-drained silt loams. The plant communities are a mosaic of oak-hickory woodland, savanna, prairie, marsh and reforestation areas. The site is known for its majestic oaks. The George Dunne Golf Course lies directly north of Yankee Woods and the Bremen Grove preserve is connected by a narrow corridor of woodland to the northwest. A parking lot and paved bicycle trails are present to the north and along the east and south perimeter. The woodlands and savanna are impacted by invasive brush and most of the restoration activity to date has been in these areas. Recent restoration includes removal of invasive brush and trees in the “triangle” and control of herbaceous invasives. In 2019-2020, volunteers began invasive brush removal in the northwest corner of the woodland south of 167th St. Future plans would include invasive brush removal and canopy tree thinning in the oak-hickory remnant woodland north of 167th St.

In total 57 acres have received restoration since 2015.



Map 27. Yankee Woods. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING Yankee Woods Volunteers, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund

WHAT'S NEXT? Yankee Woods will continue receiving stewardship work and the next step is invasive brush removal and canopy tree thinning in the oak-hickory remnant woodland north of 167th St. Invasive control will continue at a lower level in the southeastern “triangle”.

STATUS 57 acres / 120 acre unit
= 48% under restoration

Blue Star Memorial Woods & Watersmeet Woods

FPCC priority volunteer stewardship sites for restoration. Blue Star Memorial Woods is a 140 acre site located in Glenview. It is bisected north to south by the north branch of the Chicago River. It contains a mix of land types. There is remnant oak woodland, floodplain forest, reforestation, and areas with past human disturbance that have naturalized. Land management began at the site in 2011, with original work focused on the oak woodland remnant east of the river and south of the parking lot. In 2014, it became an official stewardship site and work expanded and accelerated under the auspices of the Centennial volunteer program. Since that time, work has expanded to other areas within the preserve, including the floodplain along the east edge of the river and the emerging wet woodland in the northeast of the preserve. Much of the activities have centered around woody and herbaceous invasive removal and re-seeding.

Watersmeet is a 165-acre preserve located in Northfield, immediately north of Blue Star. Its name is derived from the confluence of the Skokie River and the middle fork of the Chicago River which is located in the center of the preserve. This convergence was originally further north but changed as a consequence of hydrology work done upstream at the Skokie Lagoons. There is a marshy area at the convergence which retains characteristics of a streamside fen (due to exudate from the western Deerfield Moraine) surrounded by northern flatwoods with a swamp-white oak canopy, (shrubby) wet prairie, savanna, oak woodland, and floodplain forest as the site has both low and high ground; some areas were reforested. Restoration has been underway since 1993 by volunteers and has focused on restoring those natural communities. Some areas were reforested. Much of restoration work has involved removing invasive brush and herbaceous weeds. Seeding of damaged areas with local native seed has also been a major component. Since 2015, the main large-scale work has been buckthorn removal both by volunteers and contractors in partnership with Friends of the Chicago River. Over-seeding and invasive herbaceous control is ongoing.



Map 28. Blue Star-Watersmeet Woods. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING North Branch Restoration Project Volunteers, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Friends of the Chicago River (Habitat Grant), Friends of the Forest Preserves (NFWF Chi-Cal Centennial Volunteer Program, Conservation Corps), FPCC staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? Increased use of prescribed fire to help heal the landscape at recently restoration sites and continued treatment of invasives and seeding to improve diversity and condition of management units is planned. Expansion of restoration into adjacent existing work zones is anticipated, including seven acres of brush clearing at Watersmeet.

STATUS

Blue Star: 21 acres / 140 acre unit
= 15% under restoration

Watersmeet: 62 acres / 165 acre unit
= 38% under restoration

Bunker Hill /
Forest Glen /
Indian Road Woods /
LaBagh / Spicebush /
VRC Woods Complex

FPCC priority volunteer stewardship sites for restoration. These sites are located along the border of Chicago, Lincolnwood, and Niles along the north branch of the Chicago River and together total 460 acres. Bunker Hill contains a variety of natural communities including prairie, oak savanna, oak woodlands, northern flatwoods, and floodplain forest and includes an old river oxbow. The site has been under management for over 40 years by volunteers and exhibits some excellent examples of these natural communities. Forest Glen Woods contains woodland and forested floodplain remnants with some naturalized areas once under agriculture and other uses. It has received a strong stewardship push in recent years under the centennial volunteer program. Indian Road Woods contains woodlands, floodplain forest and a small prairie restoration. This area has been under restoration by volunteer stewards for over a decade. LaBagh Woods also contains savanna, woodlands, floodplain forest, sedge meadow, and naturalized areas. Work has been conducted there in the east woodlands/savanna for 30 plus years. More recently, migratory bird habitat work has been underway in the floodplain and adjacent uplands, including native shrub installation to improve habitat structure. Spicebush is small but mighty, with a pocket of grade B sand flatwoods with wetlands interspersed. As its name suggests, it has an abundance of spicebush in the understory. VRC Woodland is a 20-acre preserve area adjacent to the Volunteer Resource Center (VRC) and Edgebrook Golf Course. It contains floodplain forest and woodland remnants and serves as the entry point for visitors to the volunteer resource center. Although the natural communities and preserves in this complex are fractured by roads and human use, many retain good ecological function. The river runs through each and provides the connection upon which many of the animals using these sites rely.



Map 29. Bunker Hill-Forest Glen-Indian Road-LaBagh-Spicebush-VRC Woods. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

The river and preserves are important geographic features for migrating birds each spring. The main impacts to these preserves are from invasive brush, herbaceous weeds, and recovery from past human uses. Volunteers have been leading restoration workdays to address these impacts with good success. Volunteers and conservation partners have removed pockets of invasive buckthorn with promising response of rare native sedges.

FUNDING North Branch Restoration Project Volunteers, Chicago Ornithological Society, Chicago Audubon Society, NFWF 5-Star Grant, Friends of the Forest Preserves (NFWF Chi-Cal Centennial Volunteers, Conservation Corps), FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, FPCC Staff

WHAT'S NEXT? Volunteer-driven restoration supplemented by FPCC contract resources will continue to restore and connect these preserves. The intent is to remove natural barriers, such as lines of buckthorn, throughout the system to ameliorate the impacts of human imposed barriers and restore diverse natural communities. Work will focus on improving restored areas and expanding them.

STATUS 175 acres / 460 acre unit
= 38% under restoration

Linne Woods & Prairie /
Miami Woods / Perkins
Woods / St Paul Woods /
Wayside Woods Complex

FPCC priority volunteer stewardship sites for restoration. These sites are located in Morton Grove and Niles along the north branch of the Chicago River and together total 430 acres. They contain a variety of natural communities with oak woodlands and floodplain forest most pervasive with pockets of prairie and wetlands scattered throughout. These sites are all impacted by invasive brush, typically buckthorn, as well as a number of invasive herbaceous plants. Within the floodplain a newer invader, lesser celandine, is overtaking the ground layer. Deer browsing is impacting the native herbaceous plants across these sites. Ecological restoration has focused on invasive brush and herbaceous plant control followed by over-seeding of depauperate areas. Linne Woods contains remnant oak woodland, and floodplain and upland forest that has been under restoration for almost 20 years. The adjacent Linne Prairie is a reconstruction put in place after a storm-water control project – a remnant prairie/wetland remains on one side near the railroad. Miami Woods and St Paul Woods lie on either side of the river. Miami Woods has remnant woodland and a fine remnant prairie and has had extensive restoration since the 1970s. The eastern woodland is in excellent condition and requires minimal invasive work and prescribed fire to maintain. St Paul has had much restoration work done recently and has smaller remnant areas and a lot of grove space. The remnant areas consist of oak woodland and floodplain forest. Control efforts continue along the river for lesser celandine. Perkins Woods, in Evanston, is a 5-acre remnant of the Big Woods. Restoration has been on-going since the 1980's. Recently, staff removed Norway maple and volunteers installed native shrubs. Wayside Woods has a prairie, savanna and woods all under extensive restoration.



Map 30. Linne-Miami-St Paul-Wayside and Perkins Woods inset. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING North Branch Restoration Project Volunteers, many school groups, Friends of the Forest Preserves (NFWF Chi-Cal Centennial Volunteers, Conservation Corps), FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, FPCC staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? Brush removal through much of St Paul Woods will be completed. Work will continue at Wayside Woods. Linne will receive assistance from Centennial volunteers. Miami Woods will remain in a maintenance mode.

STATUS

Linne-Miami Complex: 257 acres / 430 acre unit
= 60% under restoration

Perkins Woods: 5 acres / 5 acre unit
= 100% under restoration

Skokie Lagoons / Turnbull Woods

FPCC priority volunteer stewardship sites for restoration. Skokie Lagoons and Turnbull Woods are located just east of I-94 in Glencoe and Winnetka. Turnbull Woods sits just east of Green Bay Road just inside the boundary for the Lake Michigan watershed. It is a site with some history of human use with an old homestead in the northwest corner. It currently consists of mesic oak woodlands, a few small wetland pockets, and an open field along the south. FPCC has received grant monies from USDA-NRCS over the last five years to remove invasives, thin trees, and re-seed the woodlands throughout. This work will continue into the near future, with the goal of improving and stabilizing the condition of the woods and wetland. Turnbull Woods in many ways has been transformed thorough our partnership with NRCS. Chicago Botanic Garden has provided native woodland seed for this site, which was a critical contribution. Skokie Lagoons is a large area (930 acres with 230 acres of open water), once a large sedge meadow and later converted to a series of shallow ponds with adjacent uplands and wetlands. The highest quality area is referred to as Skokie sedge meadow at Erickson Woods which retains much of the original character of the site. The site has had volunteer stewardship since 1995. A new stewardship group is being formed in partnership with the Shedd Aquarium. More recently, FPCC has had staff crews and conservation corps members working mainly on invasive wetland plant control and brush removal predominantly along Forest Way Road. Brush mowing for habitat improvement was done in 2019.

FUNDING USDA-NRCS (GLRI Grants, 2015-2020, Green Corps), FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund / Shoreline Fund, FPCC Match, Chicago Botanic Garden (Seeds), Friends of the Forest Preserves (Conservation Corps), Volunteers, Friends of the Chicago River (Habitat Grant, Skokie Lagoons).



Map 31. Skokie Lagoons and Turnbull Woods inset. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

WHAT'S NEXT? At Turnbull Woods a volunteer stewardship group is being formed. Chicago Botanic Garden is establishing and studying experimental restoration plantings to improve the quality of the old field at that site. At Skokie Lagoons, work will continue around Forest Way Road and may be initiated in the remnant sedge meadow area of Erickson Woods.

STATUS

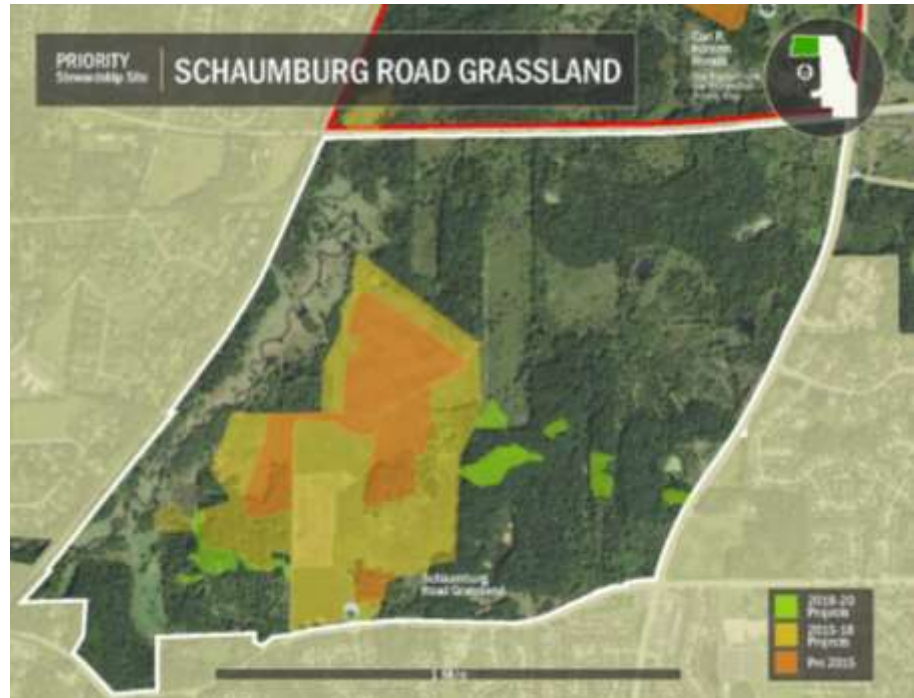
Turnbull: 64 acres / 70 acre unit
= 91% under restoration

Skokie Lagoons: 80 acres / 700 acre unit
= 11% under restoration

Schaumburg Road Grassland

FPCC priority volunteer stewardship site for restoration. Schaumburg Road Grassland is a 490-acre site embedded within a 750-acre parcel in an unincorporated area where Elgin, Streamwood and Hoffman Estates meet. It is bounded by Schaumburg Rd on the south, Rte. 59 on the East, Golf Rd on the north, and the EJ&E railroad line on the west. Poplar Creek runs north to south through the site just east of the railroad. The site is part of the larger Janura preserve system and lies south of the Poplar Creek landscape unit. Most parcels of this property

were acquired by the Forest Preserves in the mid to late 1960s and were farms at the time of purchase. The restoration areas have a history as hay fields with remnant woodlots interspersed. Large amounts of fencing have been removed from remnants of homesteads and associated fields. Drain tiles are still present in some of the former farm fields. This site is significant for a few key reasons. It preserves a 1.5 mile stretch of Poplar Creek, provides important habitat for grassland birds, and has remnant oak woods as well as sedge meadow and fen pockets. Much of the work on site has been focused on woodland and prairie restoration and on the small wetlands interspersed within them. This includes invasive control, seeding, and removal of tree lines and hedgerows that farmers installed to partition fields. Other activities have been broad invasive control, brush removal, and over seeding with native prairie species. A major conservation target for the restoration has been to enhance grassland bird habitat. This preserve has had a strong daily volunteer stewardship presence/program for over 15 years. Scenic views throughout the year attract regular hikers and walkers to this once unknown site.



Map 32. Schaumburg Road Grasslands. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards volunteers, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Friends of the Forest Preserves (Bobolink, Fox River Conservation Corps), FPCC staff, Audubon Great Lakes (Donnelley Foundation, Conservation Corps NW).

WHAT'S NEXT? Schaumburg Road Grasslands will continue as a stewardship site with the goal of continued advancement of grasslands from a pasture condition to native prairie and wetland, as well as continued restoration of woodland remnants. Next steps are over-seeding and invasive control in areas that have been cleared of invasive brush.

STATUS 178 acres / 490 acre unit
= 36% under restoration



Compass Plant, Prairie

Spring Creek

FPCC priority volunteer stewardship site for restoration. Spring Creek preserve is a nearly 3,500 acre landscape of former agricultural lands. It is located in Barrington Hills, East Dundee and Elgin. This preserve is tied together by Spring Creek which has its headwaters at the south end of the preserve and flows northward toward the Fox River. These preserves contain large tracts of grassland which serve as important habitat for grassland birds and other species. This area also includes a small high-quality remnant hill prairie, a high-quality remnant fen, and several progressively maturing prairie, savanna and woodland restorations. Restoration work has been focused on brush control, herbaceous invasive control, prescribed burning and seeding of fields to native prairie species. A core of FPCC volunteers, in partnership with Citizens for Conservation, the Barrington Greenway Initiative, Bobolink Foundation, Audubon Great Lakes, and Friends of the Forest Preserve have been engaged in prairie, wetland, and woodland restoration for the better part of two decades. Since 2017, the Fox River Conservation Corps crew has been assisting volunteer stewards in brush removal, herbaceous invasive control, and seed collection at nearly every site in Spring Creek, as well as Lake County and Citizens for Conservation (CFC) sites. Recent restoration projects include five acres of grant-funded brush removal at Galloping Hill Fen, as well as continued volunteer, Conservation Corps, and contractor efforts to control herbaceous invasives. Collection and distribution of native seed continues in partnership with Citizens for Conservation. Grass mowing/haying has continued as a grassland bird conservation tool.

FUNDING Spring Creek Stewards volunteers, Citizens for Conservation, Friends of the Forest Preserves (Bobolink Foundation, Fox River Crew),



Map 33. Spring Creek Preserves. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

Forest Preserve Foundation (Oberweiler Foundation), FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund.

WHAT'S NEXT? Volunteer stewardship will continue at current sites with the assistance of the Fox River Conservation Corps, CFC, and FPCC staff. Follow up work will continue to restore and expand the fen at Galloping Hill. Former hay fields will be mowed to retain grassland bird habitat. A key project with the Bobolink Foundation is in development to restore additional acres of non-native grasses to prairie, west of Galloping Hill (11 acres initially, more to come).

STATUS 767 acres / 3,450 acre unit
= 22% under restoration

Brookfield Prairie / McCormick Woods / Waubensee Woods / Zoo Woods

These four preserves are located near the confluence of Salt Creek and the Des Plaines River in Brookfield and surrounding municipalities. Brookfield Prairie is located within the Brookfield Woods forest preserve. The 45 acre site sits atop glacial lake bottom sediment and sustains a mosaic of remnant wet and mesic prairie, sedge meadow, oak savanna, and floodplain forest natural communities. Despite a history of disturbance, Brookfield Prairie supports a diverse assemblage of native species that are being conserved through ecological restoration work. Currently restoration work is focused along the north edge, and a few hotspots within the prairie, removing invasive brush and herbaceous weeds, coupled with prescribed fire. In the winter of 2019 the SCRM RM crew cleared one acre of invasive brush that extended into the prairie from the western border. McCormick Woods is a 35 acre preserve bisected by 1st Avenue in North Riverside, IL. The site is adjacent to Brookfield Woods and Zoo Woods forest preserves. McCormick Woods supports remnant floodplain forest and oak-dominated woodland and savanna communities. Ecological restoration work is directed toward the removal of invasive species (primarily buckthorn) in the southwest remnant and brush removal east of 1st Ave. Volunteers have now cleared about 75% of the brush east of 1st Ave. Waubensee Preserve is a 10-acre triangular site located in a residential neighborhood in Riverside, IL. The site supports remnant prairie and oak savanna communities on silt loam soil. Currently, ecological restoration work is focused on the removal of invasive species (primarily buckthorn) to help expand and bolster extant native flora and to improve conditions for prescribed burning. Zoo Woods is a 55 acre preserve located on the western bank of the Des Plaines River near Brookfield Zoo in Riverside. The site lies within the Chicago Lake Plain and supports remnant oak savanna, woodland, and floodplain forest natural communities. Ecological restoration work is focused on the removal of invasive species (primarily nonnative brush) to expand native habitat and to improve conditions for prescribed burning, a critical ecosystem process. Herbaceous plant plugs and sapling woody natives have been planted in appropriate locations.

FUNDING Des Plaines River Valley Restoration Project Volunteers, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Friends of the Forest Preserves (Conservation Corps).

WHAT'S NEXT? These sites will continue as stewardship sites with work conducted primarily by volunteers. At Brookfield Prairie the focus will be cleaning up woody invasives along its west edge



Map 34. Brookfield Prairie-McCormick-Waubensee-Zoo Woods. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

with the long-term goal being to clear all invasive woodies from prairie edge. At McCormick Woods, completing brush removal in the southwest remnant and east side of the road / west side of the river moving northward. A new steward has been recruited to work primarily at National Grove which is directly across the Des Plaines River east of McCormick Woods. The steward will work closely with McCormick Woods volunteers, and in the future as work lessens at McCormick Woods, more work is anticipated to occur at National Grove. Invasive removal and native supplementation will continue at Waubensee and Zoo Woods. A new volunteer is in training to assume stewardship responsibilities at Zoo Woods. Volunteer work will be supplemented by staff and contractor resources particularly at Brookfield Prairie.

STATUS

Brookfield Prairie: 26 acres / 45 acre unit

= 58% under restoration

McCormick Woods: 21 acres / 35 acre unit

= 60% under restoration

Waubensee Woods: 7 acres / 10 acre unit

= 70% under restoration;

Zoo Woods: 19 acres / 55 acre unit

= 35% under restoration

Cermak Prairie & Chicago Portage

FPC priority volunteer stewardship sites for restoration. Cermak Prairie is located within Cermak Woods in Lyons. Cermak Prairie is an 18-acre area containing prairie and floodplain forest. The main restoration work has been and continues to be removal of buckthorn and poplar to expand the quality prairie boundaries (generally to the east toward the river) as well as a bit in the woodlands. Chicago Portage is one of only two designated National Historic Sites in Illinois. Once part of a swamp and floodplain along the Des Plaines River, a dike now separates the land from the river, and so has changed its natural character. It is now managed to sustain natural flora and fauna to help tell the historic story of the portage. Management activities include brush removal, removal of herbaceous invaders, and restoration and enhancement of native plants. Much of this work has been done by stewards with the assistance of partners and an interested member of the public. Replanting of natives south of the trail is a future need / goal. The northern zone is maintaining woodland restoration. Since 2018, various native plantings including shrubs, trees, and plugs have occurred south of the trail to bolster diversity. Vegetation assessments are now being done to evaluate establishment and determine future needs.

FUNDING Friends of the Chicago Portage Volunteers, Friends of the Forest Preserve (Donation).

WHAT'S NEXT? Cermak Prairie next steps are removing brush along the east, north and west edges of the prairie and white poplars from the north area to further expand the prairie. Portage will continue as stewardship sites with work conducted primarily by volunteers expanding beyond current work areas and further connecting pockets of restored areas.



Map 35. Cermak Prairie-Chicago Portage. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

STATUS

Cermak Prairie: 7 acres / 18 acre unit
= 39% under restoration

Chicago Portage: 34 acres / 36 acre unit
= 94% under restoration



Wetland, Flood Plain Forest

Evans Field & Fullerton Woods

FPCC priority volunteer stewardship site for restoration. It is located in River Grove. Evans Field is an 80 acre wooded preserve, bordered by the Des Plaines River to the south and west. Underlain by glacial lake bottom sediments and recent alluvial deposits, the site supports rich floodplain forest, sedge meadow, and oak-dominated woodland communities. Formerly, this was the site of a Native American village and chipping station. At one time, the site's namesake operated a wild game farm here, which included pheasants and deer. Beginning in 2012, the FPCC initiated removal of non-native invasive species (primarily buckthorn, honeysuckle, and garlic mustard) to help protect and expand the varied native flora of this unique site. This site is relatively new to restoration and is developing a restoration program. Work underway is mainly brush removal within woodland remnant pockets. The primary ecological management goals for Evans Field are to restore ecosystem function by managing the site to exhibit the native biodiversity in species richness and evenness that would have likely existed prior to European settlement and provide the conditions for the ecosystem functions to maintain their integrity, evolve, and persist despite surrounding fragmentation and stochasticity. In order to achieve these goals the primary focus of restoration activities is to control invasive species, restore community structure (maintain tree densities, canopy coverage, and species composition within ranges ideal for desired natural communities), maintain consistent prescribed fire regimes, and enhance native vegetation where needed. In 2019, FPCC had a Green Challenge workday that led to staff from many departments clearing two acres of buckthorn.



Map 36. Evans Field & Fullerton Woods. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING Evans Field Volunteers, FPCC Staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? Evans Field will continue as a stewardship site with work conducted primarily by volunteers expanding invasive-free zones beyond current work areas and further connecting pockets of restored areas.

STATUS

Evans Field: 8 acres / 80 acre unit
= 10% under restoration

Fullerton Woods: 5 acres / 25 acre unit
= 20% under restoration

Robinson Woods & Schiller Woods

FPCC priority volunteer stewardship site for restoration. These sites are located within a larger collection of preserves along the Des Plaines River, beginning south of I-90 and extending south to Belmont adjacent to Chicago, Rosemont, Schiller Park, Franklin Park, and Norridge. The preserves include Catherine Chevalier Woods, Robinson Woods, Schiller Woods, and Che Che Pin Qua Woods. The area at Robinson Prairie that is under ecological stewardship is about 82 acres. On the west side of river, there are remnant prairie openings in the woodlands. Past efforts to restore the prairies via brush and other invasive removal has been underway for over two decades. Some excellent native species have been rescued from certain loss. More recently, work has begun to connect the openings via brush and small tree removal. Another quality prairie opening is located on the east side of the river which has more recently been cleared of woody invasives. This could be expanded as a next important step for the site. Volunteers have also made significant progress removing invasive brush and restoring a ravine and adjacent savanna/woodland in the north east section of the site.

The area at Schiller Woods that is under ecological stewardship is about 116 acres. Schiller Woods drew attention as a site exhibiting potential for ecological restoration in the 1980s with the discovery of a remnant prairie at the site where numerous rare species were extant. Thus, began efforts to restore the prairie and these efforts eventually expanded into adjacent areas of the site. Since that time work has been underway to remove invasive brush, expand the graminoid and forb understory, and introduce fire. Continued work to expand the prairie opening as well as improving the quality of portions of an adjacent savanna and woodland remnant has furthered acres under restoration. Volunteers have made significant progress removing invasive brush and restoring savanna and woodland north of the access drive. FPCC staff assisted with removal of two acres of brush.



Map 37. Robinson-Schiller Woods. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING Des Plaines River Valley Restoration Project Volunteers, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, FPCC staff.

WHAT'S NEXT? Robinson and Schiller Woods will continue as stewardship sites with work conducted primarily by volunteers expanding beyond current work areas and further connecting pockets of restored areas. At Schiller, future work will be moving invasive removal south and westward between the parking drives and trail and expanding restoration north of the access drive. At Robinson, connecting the prairie openings with healthy woods and expanding work east of the river are next steps along with expanding restoration in the ravine area.

STATUS

Robinson: 42 acres / 82 acre unit
= 51% under restoration

Schiller: 20 acres / 116 acre unit
= 17% under restoration

Kloempken Prairie

FPCC priority volunteer stewardship site for restoration. Kloempken Woods and Prairie is a 121-acre natural area in Des Plaines adjacent to Oakton Community College. Ecological restoration efforts began in 1988 with a grant to restore an area mowed by the FPCC along Golf Rd. into prairie. This project was funded by a \$25,000 grant with ecological contractor hired to conduct restoration activities and plant native prairie seed in 1988 and 1989. In 1991 the first volunteer steward began working at the site. The site is adjacent to Oakton community college and its 80 acres of remnant natural areas. A volunteer steward began working at Oakton in 1983 and began conducting natural area management activities in 1996 as a horticulturist/groundskeeper at Oakton. The steward has partnered with the lead volunteers at Kloempken to help manage both sites and treat them as one contiguous natural area enhancing the effective size of both preserves. Since the initial focus on prairie restoration, work has expanded into the woodlands, savannas, and wetlands. Past work has been expansion of the prairie, improvement of remnant areas through invasive management, and connection with the adjacent woodlands. Currently, volunteers are working north and east in the remnant woodland toward Central road and expanding restored openings just west of the multiuse trail eventually connecting them along with continued maintenance of past prairie work.



Map 38. Kloempken Prairie. Recent restoration work is shown in GREEN shading. Formerly restored areas shown in YELLOW and ORANGE shading.

FUNDING Kloempken Volunteers, FPCC Habitat Enhancement Fund, Friends of the Forest Preserves (Conservation Corps).

WHAT'S NEXT? Kloempken Prairie will continue as a stewardship site with work conducted primarily by volunteers expanding beyond current work areas and further connecting pockets of restored areas.

STATUS 99 acres / 121 acre unit
= 82% under restoration