

Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund Small Project Final Report

Grant Agreement #11-011W

Grand Prairie Friends
P.O. Box 36
Urbana, IL 61802

January 6, 2011-December 31, 2011

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Project Title: East-central Illinois Natural Areas Internship

Project Objectives:

- a) Teach two interns about tallgrass prairie, woodland, savanna, and wetland natural areas stewardship in east-central Illinois;
- b) Teach interns how to identify native and weedy plants in natural areas in east-central Illinois;
- c) Demonstrate current prairie, woodland, savanna, and wetland management and ecological restoration techniques from professional and volunteer land managers to interns;
- d) Interns and stewards manage natural areas by removal of exotic and woody vegetation as prescribed;
- e) Interns gain experience with hands-on natural lands management including safe and proper tool and herbicide use; and
- f) Coordinate with site stewards to perform other needed management activities.

Project Description:

For the summer of 2011, Grand Prairie Friends (GPF) proposed to hire two interns to carry out ecological management work in about 35 prairie, woodland, savanna, and wetland natural areas, both remnant and planted, around east-central Illinois. The summer internship program, started in 1994, is needed to supplement the work of volunteer stewards. Summer interns spent much of their time removing or controlling exotic invasive plant species and collecting seeds of native plant species. They also spent time in the field with various volunteers and natural resources professionals to learn about management techniques, plant identification, and natural areas ecology.

Summary of Project Accomplishments

Introduction

Grand Prairie Friends (GPF) is an all-volunteer not-for-profit conservation group based in

Urbana, Illinois. Management of native tall grass prairie remnants has been a focus of the group since formation and incorporation in 1984. In 2004, we joined forces and merged with another local group, Prairie Grove Volunteers, and we expanded our conservation focus to include woodland, savanna, and wetland natural areas as well. We rely on many dedicated volunteers to provide the labor to steward over 35 natural areas in east-central Illinois (Figure 1.). The group also assists and relies on the expertise of professionals from various agencies such as the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Illinois Natural History Survey, the University of Illinois, the Champaign County Forest Preserve District, the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, the Urbana Park District, the Vermilion County Conservation District, and others. While we steward natural areas using the wonderful efforts of volunteers and professionals, this is usually not enough to get all the work done that is needed to conserve and protect these sites.

In 1994, GPF started a summer internship program to supplement the work of volunteer stewards. Summer interns, usually young, college students or recent graduates, are hired to help manage prairie, woodland, savanna and wetland natural areas, both remnant and planted, around east-central Illinois. At this time GPF also started growing and selling native plants to raise money to fund the summer internship program.

The bulk of the work is controlling exotic and invasive plant species as well as cutting brush, maintaining signs and collecting seed from native plants. Removal of exotic and invasive species benefits the native flora and fauna of each site. Not only do the interns provide valuable work for natural areas, they also receive an education about natural resources management. They spend quite a few days each summer with professionals in the field such as land managers, botanists and ecologists to learn about the ecology, native organisms and management of our local natural areas. The hands-on work and experiences with natural resource managers and scientists benefit the interns by providing education they can use in their future studies and career.

Materials and Methods

Applications for the internships were accepted from mid January to the end of March. An internship subcommittee (consisting of GPF Board of Directors members) reviewed applications and selected candidates. Candidates were interviewed in early April.

The internship program has been a 90-day commitment from June 1 to August 31, but for 2011, the GPF Board approved expanding the internship to start as early as May 1. Interns were given a GPF Intern Manual which consists of background information about GPF, lists of GPF sites and stewards, management needs at each site, general position information, internship goals, a calendar, and reporting forms. Two books, Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers and The Tallgrass Restoration Handbook were given to each intern. They were also allowed to borrow a copy of DeLorme's Illinois Atlas & Gazetteer to find their way around east-central Illinois. Interns provide their own auto (if using a personal vehicle) and health insurance, but are covered under GPF's liability insurance while working on any GPF site. GPF owns a truck for use by the interns; GPF provides auto insurance on this vehicle.

Interns reported weekly to the internship coordinator during the course of the summer to plan stewardship activities, turn in time sheets and ask any questions. Interns were paid \$9.00/hr. Work included management activities at natural areas sites and educational activities as well as drive time to and from sites. Interns turned in a time sheet every two weeks reporting hours worked, mileage driven, sites visited, and work performed. They were reimbursed for vehicle mileage, if they used a personal vehicle otherwise GPF reimburses interns for fuel in the GPF truck. The GPF Treasurer issued paychecks after timesheets were approved by the internship coordinator. Interns were required to obtain a pesticide applicator license from the Illinois Department of Agriculture to learn how to safely apply herbicides at managed sites.

Interns were required to perform management work at sites as determined by site stewards and the internship coordinator. At the beginning of the internship they were given an orientation as to the scope of work and a tour of sites where they will be working. Educational components of the internship include time spent with professionals and volunteers from organizations throughout east-central Illinois, including the University of Illinois, Parkland College, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Natural History Survey, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Champaign County Forest Preserve District, Urbana Park District, and others. Through these organizations, interns were exposed to a wide variety of management and educational perspectives that exist within the natural area conservation community.

Results

In April 2011, GPF hired two applicants. Caroline Martorano and Christie Klinger were offered and hired to work full-time (40 hr/wk) internship positions. Even though they could have started as early as May 1, class work and final exams at their respective colleges prevented them from starting that early. Christie started her internship on May 23 and Caroline on May 31.

Formal contracts were drawn up between each intern and GPF, and they each started work with an orientation and expectations meeting with the internship coordinator and a few volunteer stewards. They were each given a driving tour of some natural areas where they would be working.

On June 6, each intern successfully passed the required tests and obtained valid Illinois Pesticide Applicator Licenses.

Combined, Caroline and Christie spent close to 1,000 hours performing and learning about hands-on stewardship work at approximately 19 sites around east-central Illinois during May, June, July, August, and September 2011 (Table 1.). Much of their work involved the removal of exotic invasive species from natural areas. For most of June, they worked at prairie remnants and plantings pulling wild parsnip and sweet clover as well as spraying Canada thistle with herbicide. In woodland and prairie sites they also worked to remove woody invasive plant species such as autumn olive, bush honeysuckle, and multiflora rose by cutting the woody stems and stump treating the cut stem with glyphosate herbicide. In July, they tackled teasel at Loda Cemetery Prairie and Korean bushclover at the Doris Westfall Prairie.

The interns spent a little time over the course of the summer moving plants leftover from GPF's native plant sale. They removed daylily from Pellsville and Loda cemetery prairies and sprayed the *Sericea Lespedeza* at the Doris Westfall Prairie. In addition, they removed American plum and other woody plant species at Pellsville Cemetery at the request of the landowner.

In order to support the Load prairie expansion project, they also collected seeds of a few species throughout the summer. Prairie phlox, spiderwort, wood betony, lead plant, spiderwort, New Jersey tea, and purple prairie clover were a few of the species they targeted. Seeds collected will be used to on the Loda Prairie expansion project and also for the native plant sale.

In addition to their work time, the interns spent time with local natural resource professionals and volunteers. Illinois Natural History Survey botanists and plant ecologists including Dave Ketzner, Rick Larimore, Paul Tessene, and Jamie Ellis were able to spend time in the field with the interns teaching them plant ID and ecology of natural areas. Mr. Ketzner spent a whole morning in the classroom and in the field teaching them grass identification. GPF volunteer Jim Payne led the interns on work outings to Jasmine Hollow and Embarras Bluffs, two woodland preserves, to control woody invasive species, and Phil Hult, steward at Buffalo Trace Prairie, led them on outings to remove invasive species such as wild parsnip, sweet clover, and autumn olive. Dan Olson worked with the interns at Champaign County Forest Preserve District sites and Volunteer Bob Vaiden introduced them to Urbana Park District restorations. In addition Mr. Olson taught Christie and Caroline proper and safe use of the power brushcutter and chainsaw. Caroline and Christie additionally spent time with Mary Kay Solecki and Roger Jansen of IDNR and were able to tour a variety of other natural areas and restorations over the course of the summer to expand upon their understanding of Illinois natural history.

Discussion and Summary

In the summer of 2011, GPF hired two summer interns. Caroline Martorano and Christie Klinger worked a total of 993 hours during May, June, July and August. Most of this time, 816 hours, was spent in the field at prairie, forest, wetland, and savanna natural areas removing exotic, invasive plant species, collecting seeds, and performing other site work. The remainder of the time was spent studying for the pesticide exam, learning to identify plants, touring natural areas, or meeting with volunteers and professionals.

Overall, Grand Prairie Friends was very happy with the effort and work accomplished by the two interns, and we feel that the project objectives were met. Due to various scheduling conflicts, the interns weren't able to work as many hours as budgeted, but this did not detract from the quantity or quality of work they accomplished.

Project Expenditures

For the summer 2011 internship, GPF spent a total of \$9977.44 (Table 2). The two interns worked a total of 993 hours. At \$9.00/hr we spent \$8,937 in salaries. Additionally we spent another \$1040.44 in travel, supplies, and contractual services. We budgeted to pay for the

internship with funds raised from our annual plant sales and a grant from the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund (Table 3).

Figure 1. Map of project area with GPF managed natural area sites in

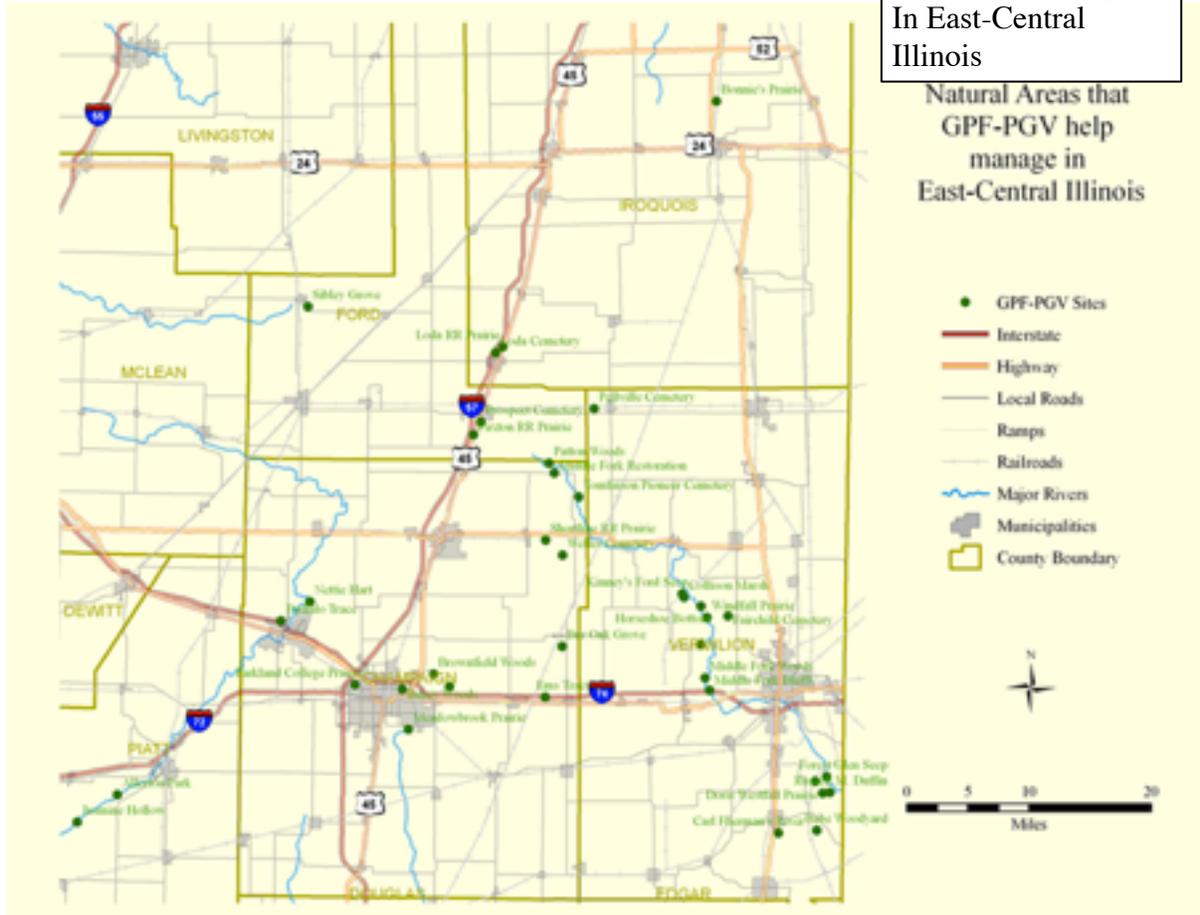


Table 1. Summary of stewardship hours worked by Grand Prairie Friends 2011 summer interns including major stewardship tasks performed at each site. Hours are summed from each intern and may include drive time to and from sites. Ownership of site is indicated in parentheses.*

Natural Area/Site/Task	Total Hours	Major Tasks
Barnhart Prairie Project	87	locate and spray Canada thistle; cut white mulberry
Bonnie's Prairie Nature Preserve (GPF)	16	spray reed canary grass
Bruninga Prairie	7	spray Canada thistle
Buffalo Trace Prairie (CCFPD)	50.5	pull wild parsnip, sweet clover; cut white mulberry
Don Gardner Prairie tour	20	visit Weston, Gardner, and English prairies; Sibley Grove
Doris Westfall Prairie Nature Preserve (VCCD)	62	spray Korean bush clover
Embarras Bluffs	25.5	cut and treat honey suckle, autumn olive, multiflora rose
Ems' Tract (GPF)	5	spray Canada thistle
Florida/Orchard Prairie Project (University of Illinois)	25.5	spray Canada thistle; remove piles of prickly lettuce
Grass ID workshop	8	learn grasses with Dave Ketzner
Horseshoe Bottom (VCCD)	56.5	treat autumn olive and multiflora rose
I-Bldg thistle control (UI)	4	spray Canada thistle
Jasmine Hollow	36	remove multiflora rose
Kickapoo State Park (IDNR)	5	basal bark spray autumn olive
Leuszler/Meredith Prairie	4	pull sweet clover
Loda Cemetery Prairie Nature Preserve (GPF)	92	pull wild parsnip, sweet clover; cut and treat teasel; spray daylilies
Meadowbrook Park Prairie (UPD)	18	pull wild parsnip, sweet clover
Pellsville Cemetery Prairie	63	pull wild parsnip, sweet clover; cut woody brush
Pesticide Test/Study Time	47	study and take exam
Prospect Cemetery Prairie Nature Preserve	33.5	pull wild parsnip, sweet clover; cut woody brush
Seed Collecting	68	various sites--native prairie plants seeds
Shortline RR Prairie (GPF)	92	pull wild parsnip, sweet clover
Survey Prairie/Pollinatarium (UI)	8	cut woody brush
Vet Med Prairie (UI)	45.5	cut prickly lettuce, woody invaders

Windfall Prairie (VCCD)	8	treat autumn olive
Windsor Road (City of Champaign)	4	cut and treat woody brush
Education/Natural Area Field Trips	86	various trips and outings
Miscellaneous	16	greenhouse work; wash Nomex suits; prepare postcard mailing
Total	993	

*Ownership is indicated in parentheses: CCFPD = Champaign County Forest Preserve District, UPD = Urbana Park District, IDNR = Illinois Department of Natural Resources, GPF = Grand Prairie Friends, VCCD = Vermilion County Conservation District. Site is privately owned if ownership is not indicated.

Table 2. Detailed budget of expenditures

PERSONNEL				
Name or Position Title	Hourly Rate	Hours	Total	
Summer Intern (Caroline Martorano)	\$9.00	440.5	\$3,964.50	
Summer Intern (Christie Klinger)	\$9.00	552.5	\$4,972.50	
			\$8,937.00	
TRAVEL				
Position/Description	Item Rate	Quantity	Total	
Summer Intern Mileage Reimbursement	\$0.30/mile	431 miles	\$129.30	
			\$129.30	
EQUIPMENT (provided by applicant)				
Description	Price/Item	Quantity	Total	
(equipment needed already on-hand)	0	0	0	
MATERIALS/SUPPLIES				
Description, Vendor	Price/Item	Quantity	Total	Date
Chemical gloves, Blain's Farm & Fleet	3.99/pr	1 pair	\$3.99	6/7/2011
Safety glasses, Blain's Farm & Fleet	\$3.88/pr	1 pair	\$3.88	6/7/2011
			\$7.87	
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES				
Description	Total			
none	\$0			
	\$0			
OTHER				
Description	Total			
Books for interns	\$126.22			
Fuel in GPF truck	\$685.89			
	\$812.11			
TOTAL COST OF PROJECT	\$9,977.44			

Table 3. Statement of Sources and Uses of Funds

Funding Sources:

IDNR Wildlife Fund grant	\$2,000.00
GPF Plant Sale Proceeds	\$7,977.44

Total \$9,977.44

Funding Uses:

Personnel	\$8,937.00
Travel	129.30
Equipment	0
Materials/Supplies	7.87
Contractual Services	0
Other	812.11

Total \$9,977.44

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
FY11 WILDLIFE PRESERVATION FUND GRANT PROGRAM

PAYMENT REQUEST CERTIFICATION

Grantee Information

Grantee Name: Grand Prairie Friends
P.O. Box 36
Urbana, IL 61803

Grant Agreement #: 11-011W

Amount of
Reimbursement Requested: \$ 2,000.00

I certify that the goods or services specified on this request for payment were for the use of this agency and that the expenditure for such goods or services was authorized and lawfully incurred, that such goods or services meet all the required standards set forth in the grant agreement to which this request for payment relates, and that the amount shown below on this request is correct and approved for payment.

By: [Signature] Date: 1/20/12
(Signature)

Name: Derek Liebert Title: BOARD MEMBER

Grantee F.E.I.N./TIN: 37-1159051

Attach copies of vendor billings, proof of payment, and other necessary documentation and send the Request for Payment Certification to:

Eric Smith
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
301 South Date Street
Gibson City, IL 60936

Telephone #: (217)784-4730 x225
E-Mail Address: Eric.Smith@Illinois.gov

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for Payment: _____
Signature

Name: _____

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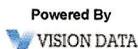
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Two young women standing in a forest next to a large tree trunk. The woman on the left is wearing a tie-dye t-shirt and dark pants. The woman on the right is wearing a light green t-shirt with the text 'Crown ON LONG ISLAND' and khaki pants.

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