

Land Steward Report – June, 2018 (Covers Jan-May 2018)

Completed Spring Work:

- Chipped North Prairie trails (two of the paths were permanently closed first to reduce maintenance).
- Chipped east side of pond after laying down cut limbs (corduroy trail concept). *[An Eagle Scout candidate is considering a project to build a boardwalk at the wettest location at the curve at the northeast corner of the pond.]*
- Cleared around cedars on east side of peninsula.
- Planted a Shrubby St. John's Wort north of the bench on the berm.
- Pulled a lot of vinca in prairie.
- Sowed oat cover crop over vinca area and in bare spot in Oak Savanna where plastic had been used to kill a large patch of Canada thistle.
- Inserted about 30 red-osier dogwood stems along pond from peninsula to OHAC (need to check if they rooted).
- Dug new rain garden to handle rain and sump pump outflow just west of Antietam entrance. Native flowers and grass and sedge seeds purchased using \$533 grant from Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's Office, to be installed June 9. *[An Eagle Scout candidate is considering repeating this project at another wet area of the trail further west.]*
- Pulled several patches of Dame's Rocket (mostly by Amphitheater and Conboy Trail)) and bagged flowers/seed pods for landfilling.
- Poured floor for equipment storage shed near school's vegetable garden.

2018 Burns:

- Prairie and North Prairie, completed spring.
- Northern half of The Hollow, completed spring.
- Northern half of Oak Savanna, July, possibly in fall also prior to seeding.
- Southern half of The Hollow, hopefully in fall.
- North and central part of peninsula, hopefully fall but probably 2019.

These burns do a good job of killing smaller buckthorn and honeysuckle, and top-killing larger ones (which will regrow from energy in their roots). For esthetic reasons, we are trying to get out after the burns to cut down the dead trunks.

Upcoming Work (June/July):

- Plant Oak/Hickory Woods Rain Garden and sow seeds in eroded/wet areas upstream from it. We may also move some bloodroot into the area.
- Cut and daub flowering honeysuckle throughout the center.
- Cut remaining Canada thistle in Oak Savanna to rob it of energy (and spray regrowth to kill it in fall).
- Clear trails in North Prairie and the Peninsula Trail.
- Kill oriental bittersweet along Peninsula Trail.
- Burn northern half of Oak Savanna.
- Cut top-killed honeysuckle and buckthorn in this year's burn areas.
- Kill patch of grass and select plants to make buffer strip (about 70' x 8') along pond in front of OHAC (pending their approval to purchase plants and do planting).

General Notes and Observations from June 3:

Prairies

- Bloodroot has been expanding its range into the area between the prairies.
- Explosion of dragonflies this year.
- Regular sighting of garter snake along southernmost N. Prairie path.
- A lot of the buckthorn is coming back after the spring burn top-killed them.
- Some other fire-killed shrubs to cut.

The Hollow (low area west of the berm)

- A lot of flowering honeysuckle to cut and daub mid-June before seeds set.
- A lot of top-killed honeysuckle and buckthorn to cut.
- Poison ivy growing at edge of berm and in a few interior areas.
- Should burn southern half this fall if possible.

Around the bridge

- Area SE of bridge should get cleaned up – flowering honeysuckle, thistle and other plants crowding out desired natives.
- Lots of blue-flag iris growing in water.
- Looks like there will be a lot of jewelweed flowering this year – hummingbirds will love it.
- Small amount of surviving phragmites to deal with in fall NE of bridge.
- Arrowhead at Clague inlet is back – foliage must have been eaten last year.

Oak-Hickory Woods

- Still no occupants of the wood duck/hooded merganser boxes.
- At least three types of sedges growing near water in front of the bench.
- New rain garden hole had a lot of standing water – but heard it was dry previous week. May need to widen the part of the berm nearest the trail to prevent seepage.

NE part of pond (Antietam entrance and east and south towards OHAC)

- Blooming honeysuckle to deal with in June.
- Privet at bottom of Antietam stairs still partially alive after trying to kill it during two burns.
- Lots of cup plant near picnic table at Antietam entrance.
- Arrowhead doing well in Antietam inlet channel.
- Trail on east of pond much better after adding corduroy path and more wood chips. However, it looks like the sticks need to be covered more as they are being dislodged when walked on.

Near OHAC pool

- Buffer strip from near the river birch to 10' past the large willow's dripline will need to be 70' long x 6' wide. Awaiting OHAC decision to proceed.
- Most of the cattails in water have been killed, just a few left growing. Would look a lot better if the dead stalks were cut below water level. Still have cattails alive where buffer strip will go.
- A few arrowhead growing in the water right where we want to add more water plants (after the cattails are completely eradicated).

Pool to Amphitheater

- Some phragmites still alive in front of the south-side bench.
- Some (soft-stem?) bulrush in water to the right of this bench.
- Large amounts of Dame's rocket around amphitheater and picnic tables (removed).

Amphitheater to Outlet

- Lots of flowering honeysuckle along trail to deal with in June.
- Lots of Golden Alexanders and sedges near outlet (sowed in 2016).
- Beehive grate somewhat plugged. Did not have rake to fix.
- Nesting island sides eroded quite a bit. Expect island to be mostly gone in five more years.

Peninsula

- Plant labeled Virginia creeper definitely is not; appears to be oriental bittersweet, which will require control soon (flowering now). Will confirm ID with Wild Ones members during TNC Tour 6/13.
- Want to burn north and central part of peninsula within the next year if possible. Lots of buckthorn and some honeysuckle.
- Lizard's tail in water along west end of Peninsula Trail is doing well. Want to cut alders that are growing between trail and water.

Oak Savanna

- Northern Half:
 - Natives: Lots of volunteer cup plants and fleabane, and sowed prairie brome. Much of the rest is weeds.
- Southern Half:
 - Many natives are approaching full height or already flowering, including swamp and common milkweed, penstemon, golden alexanders, fleabane, lance-leaf coreopsis, Va. mountain mint. Many young volunteer cup plants.
 - Some Canada thistle growing – needs to be cut soon.
 - Killdeer nesting somewhere in or near the area covered last year with plastic.

Butterfly/Hummingbird Rain Garden

- Bushes north and east of trellis doing well. Could use labels. The hazelnuts are finally thriving, these were intended for oak savanna but kept out while we established the grasses and flowers. Need to move them within a year or so.
- The purple milkweed seedlings did not survive (or are especially late in coming up).
- Blue-flag and yellow irises in bloom. The yellow ones were not in the original design and are non-native – suggest removal.
- Several sedges and rushes are setting seed.
- Rose mallows are about 1-1/2' tall.
- Area still needs rope around it. Mowers are not mowing the path between the rain gardens.