

## Land Steward Report – November, 2019 (Covers March – October, 2019)

Color key: Black = Work performed in period. Blue = Notes from 10/29 walkaround. Red = Future plans (info on future burn plans is consolidated at the end).

**Prairie:** The area sowed last fall (after the water line project) displayed a lot of weeds above the emerging natives. Mostly tall white clover and common ragweed. Area was mowed in early August to prevent these from reseeding. Also pulled a lot of giant ragweed. Planted some leadplant and purple milkweed in August in some bare spots but not sure either survived. The tall white clover and common ragweed have continued growing, but after the summer mowing, little of it has bloomed. Some native plants growing well, though they are hard to see under the weeds. Black-eyed Susan still in bloom. There are some gravelly bare spots – will sow prairie seeds (already harvested from various local sources) there in November. Would like to sow more native grass and maybe flower seeds in 2020 or after a spring 2021 burn. Planning to make a new large TNC sign to replace the Prairie sign destroyed during the water line project, so it can be installed in the spring.

**North Prairie:** We had a successful volunteer work day in the spring to remove all the tree debris left by the school's grounds contractor when they cut down dead trees (without our knowledge). We followed this with a burn (along with the portions of the original Prairie that were not affected by the water line project).

**South End of Conboy Trail:** We planted 117 shrubs and ground cover plants in July, to extend the trail back to the large TNC sign that was stranded when trees were cut for the water line project. Most of the plants have survived. Several plants have been clipped, and a couple pulled out completely, by deer. Want to purchase and sow some low flower and ground cover seeds this November. Plan is to extend the planted area further to the east and west next fall. Plan to finish a replacement Conboy Trail sign.

**Hummingbird Rain Garden:** There has been ongoing work to maintain the area (e.g., removing weeds and non-native/invasive yellow iris; planted a few purple milkweeds by the trellis). Killed a couple volunteer shrubs that were crowding the hazelnut shrubs. About 5" of water following 1.4" of rain three days earlier. Lots of rose mallow seeds still in their pods. Will sow some harvested bottle gentian seed into the southern pool in November.

**Oak Savanna (South):** Did not get to burn in the spring as we had wanted. Some giant ragweed, phragmites and purple loosestrife removed during the summer. Mowed around the oaks to reduce flammable growth, in prep for a burn next spring. Harvested seeds from a few big bluestem, ironweed and prairie dock (all taller than desired for a short-grass prairie) to put in the (tall-grass) prairie. Lots of aster and goldenrod seeds. A couple nice patches of mountain mint finally getting established.

**Oak Savanna (North):** Area was seeded last fall. We mowed in early August to prevent reseeding by the annual weeds. Planted purple milkweed in August. Lots of low natives established this summer. Some of the sowed black-eyed Susan and fleabane currently in flower. There is a fair amount of undesirable clover and Queen Anne's lace, some flowering, but these should not be a long-term problem. Will be able to add more purple milkweed in the spring.

**OHAC:** An 8' x 77' native plant buffer strip was planted along the pond edge to reduce runoff and discourage geese from coming up onto the lawn. Project was paid for mostly by a \$845 grant from the Washtenaw County Water Resources Office, with OHAC covering a portion above the grant amount. The buffer strip was planted by Girl Scout Troop GSHOM 40039. This will take a couple years to really fill in. Nutsedge creeping up into the planting from the waterline. A couple cattails to kill. Pulled some blooming Queen Anne's lace. Most plants doing okay but fair amount of non-desired plants. Need a sign for skaters to use the walkway, since the new plants will be covered by snow the next two winters. OHAC will need to weed the area in the spring.

**NE of Pond:** Some phragmites to kill next fall.

**Oak/Hickory Woods Rain Gardens:** Several spicebush plants were added above the east RG (near the Antietam entrance) in spring. Boy Scout Troop 1 built a second RG further west during the summer. The west RG looks fine. It looks like nearly all of the plants survived, plus there is a lot of moss growing on the berm, which will help stabilize it more. The east one has been overtopped by water and needs reinforcing.

**Oak/Hickory Woods:** Need to eliminate a burning bush with berries near pond, SSE of west merganser/wood duck house. Need to clean egg shells out of that duck house. Will ask Plantwise to make recommendations in early spring on how to deal with the winter creeper, vinca major and minor, and English ivy on the east end.

**SE of Bridge:** Several good size redbuds near bench. A few smaller ones might be transplantable. There are phragmites to kill next fall.

**The Hollow (low area west and south of the berm):** Lots of buckthorn and honeysuckle growing back, since we were not able to burn last spring.

**Peninsula:** A few phragmites need to be killed next fall near the eastern bench (may need to get to this via the water), and north of the outlet settling pool. Would like to sow native grass on north side, north of trail, to create fuel for future burns.

**Amphitheater:** Pulled out Dame's rocket during the summer. Cut and poisoned about 80 purple loosestrife near here and elsewhere around pond. The quantity and extent of these two invasives has been reduced after several years of effort. Buckthorn in the area east of the amphitheater, between Pond Circle Trail and the paved path, has mostly filled back in after several years of cutting. Need to address this at some point. There are some phragmites to kill next fall near the bench near the pond. Plan to finish replacement DNR and BoE dedication signs.

**Future Ecological Burns:** Highest priority areas for 2020 are: Oak/Hickory Woods, Oak Savanna (southern half), The Hollow, North Prairie and the portion of the original Prairie that was not disturbed by the water line project, and the two rain gardens nearest the school parking lot. I will get quotes for the Oak/Hickory Woods and The Hollow, as these are too large for us to burn ourselves. Other areas that we should burn in future years include the Peninsula and the area between the Amphitheater and OHAC.

Jim Vallem, 11/6/2019