



Open Space 2014 Annual Report

Libertyville Township Open Space District owns over 1,500 acres of Open Space. The Township has 2 full time employees who are responsible for all maintenance and restoration efforts. In addition to the staff, Libertyville Township has a long standing established partnership with Conserve Lake County (formerly known as Liberty Prairie Conservancy). Conserve Lake County links the Township to grant opportunities, coordinates volunteer work days and provides professional assistance in a variety of areas.

Special Projects

Birdscaping Project

The Lake County Audubon Society envisioned an enhanced habit for birds in Liberty Prairie by creating a birdscaping program. In 2014, the Township received a second \$5,000.00 grant donation from Lake County Audubon Society and the DAS Charitable Fund for the Preservation of Feline Animal Life. The funds were used for a large scale tree and shrub planting. The plant materials were reviewed and approved by the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission. Twenty volunteers and two township staff members planted 198 shrubs and trees.

Trees and shrubs were watered throughout the summer during dry periods. Fencing was installed around the trees to protect from deer during the winter months. Herbicide was applied to the invasives in the project site in July and August. The project site was mowed in August. A prescribed burn is planned for 2015.

Quarterly reports are provided to the DAS Charitable Fund for the Preservation of Feline Animal Life. The final report will be submitted on March 31, 2015.

Canterbury Prescribed Burn

Applied Ecological Services was hired to conduct a prescribe burn on the Canterbury site. Due to poor weather conditions, a portion of the site was not burned. The remainder site was burned in April 2014. It was extremely successful with 91.3 acres burned.

Casey Road Land Use Conceptual Plan

On November 13, 2014, the Libertyville Township Board of Trustees voted to adopt the Casey Road Land Use Plan. The purpose of the plan is to guide land use on 303 acres of farmland acquired in the 1980s and 1990s. The 303 acres have been under a long-term agricultural license that is set to expire in December 2015.

In December 2013, the Township created the ad hoc Casey Road Land Use Advisory Committee to assist with information collection and analysis. The committee included representatives from Libertyville Township, Conserve Lake County, Lake County Forest Preserve District, Lake County Stormwater Management Commission and Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Additional expertise from such groups as the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service was also provided.

The approved plan honors the stated intent of the conservation easements placed on the majority of these lands and the wishes of township residents as expressed through the Open Space District's enabling legislation of 1985 and the three public comment periods of 2014. It will employ an environmentally sensitive combination of farming and restoration practices that transitions over time to a restored landscape

of native prairies, wetlands and savannas. This conservative, phased approach will use both corn-and-bean farming and hay farming in a way that reduces impact to soil and water quality while generating income to support restoration efforts.

Girl Scout Planting Project

Girl Scout Troop 40407 partnered with the Township in a planting project at Lindholm Park. The girl scouts assisted with the planting of two hundred plugs and designed two signs which are displayed in the project area.

River Road Phase 2 Trail Project

In the fall of 2013, the Waukegan Park District began the 2nd phase of the River Road Trail construction project. Construction and repairs continued through the spring, summer and fall of 2014. The Waukegan Park District held a Ribbon Cutting on Saturday, November 1.

Rt. 137/Bull Creek Trail Project

In 2013, the Township began exploring the options of constructing a long requested trail on the Rt. 137 property. A public open house was held on March 20 to seek public input on the trail and received overwhelming support for the project. On June 12, the Township engaged the engineering services of Pearson Brown, Inc. It is anticipated construction will begin in late spring/early summer 2015.

St. Mary's Trail Improvement Project

The construction of the trail was completed in May 2014. The project still awaits final close-out.

Volunteer Herbicide Class for Open Space Volunteers

On January 11, Libertyville Township and Conserve Lake County partnered offered an herbicide training class to volunteers interested obtaining a volunteer herbicide license. The license allows open space volunteers to participate in herbicide activities under the supervision of Township staff and Conserve Lake County's Director of Volunteers.

Volunteer Work Days

Volunteer Work Days are held the second Saturday of each month from 9:00 to Noon at Oak Openings or Liberty Prairie. The Work Days are a coordinated effort between the Township and Conserve Lake County. In 2014, 10 work days were held at Oak Openings and 2 were held at Liberty Prairie. On average, 6 volunteers attended per work day. Activities included applying herbicide, clearing invasive species, collecting seed, pulling garlic mustard and/or clover and participating in prescribed burns.

Conservation Easement Baseline Data

In 2010, Libertyville Township began documenting baselines and conducting annual monitoring for the conservation easements it holds on 6 privately owned properties. The work is being carried out with the assistance of Conserve Lake County. This provides an opportunity for the Township to partner with the landowners to ensure the integrity of each conservation easement is maintained. In 2014, the Township completed the following monitoring activities:

- Brennan Easement – In March, the new owners began constructing a new home on the property adjacent to the easement. Weekly inspections of the easement have been conducted to monitor any impacts.
- Bott Easement – Completed annual easement monitoring in June 2014.

- Getz Easement – This easement covers three separate properties. Separate baselines have been created for each property.
 - Completed annual easement monitoring for Getz 1 in March 2014.
 - Completed and presented baseline to Getz 2 property owner in February 2014.
 - Completed annual easement monitoring for Getz 3 in August 2014.
- Maxey Easement – Completed annual easement monitoring in March 2014.

Site Specific Activities

In 2014, the Libertyville Township Open Space District applied approximately 871.95 gallons of herbicide, planted 226 trees, spread approximately 921 pounds of seed covering 112.3 acres, cleared 13.5 acres of invasive woody species, planted 200 plugs, and conducted prescribed burns on 254.4 acres. These numbers will fluctuate based on each property's needs over time.

Atkinson

- Land and Water Resources and Applied Ecological Services continued creation of the mitigation bank
- Applied 5 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Spread 100 pounds of seed to one acre of creek plug area
- Installed 2 signs – stop/stop ahead
- Reconstructed trail was monitored following rain events for potential drainage issues
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments

Canterbury/Butterfield

- Diamond Dash – 10.18.14
- Spread 145 pounds of seed to 41 acres
- Applied Ecological Services conducted prescribe burn on 91.3 acres
- McGinty applied 110 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Applied 222 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Planted 25 trees
- Cleaned out garbage, log jams, and debris from 2,550 feet of Seavey ditch
- Property surveyed and markers installed
- Repaired sections of trail and rolled entire trail
- Trimmed and raised trees along the trail
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments

Kildare

- Spread 5 pounds of seed to less than 1 acre
- One rules sign installed
- Installed 130 feet of split rail fence
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments

Liberty Prairie

- Remediation work for the Bull Creek Headwaters project was completed
- Conducted and completed drain tile survey
- Botanical walk through with Ken Klick, Ecologist from the Lake County Forest Preserve to update plant inventory and vegetation monitoring – 5.15.14
- Volunteers for the birdscape project planted 198 trees and shrubs and installed one birdhouse
- Applied 195.5 gallons of herbicide to invasive species

- Spread 24 pounds of seed to 6 acres
- Collected 30 pounds of seed
- Conducted prescribe burn on 72.6 acres
- Installed one gate sign, four signs at board walk and replaced sign along farm field
- Installed 1 bench
- Applied sealant to both board walks – 7.24.14
- Repaired sections of trail and rolled entire trail
- Site of 2 volunteer work day – 5.32 gallons of herbicide applied, seed was collected and brush was cut
- Conducted property inspections

Milwaukee Road

- Conducted prescribed burn on 3.5 acres
- Applied 8 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Installed 2 wire gate signs and wire gate
- Conducted property inspections

Libertyville Township Soccer Complex (LTSC)

- Weekly site visits during construction project
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments

Oak Openings

- On site meeting with Lewis Nicols from National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)
- Completed surveying of property and installed markers
- Completed parking lot resurfacing project
- Conducted prescribe burn on 48.6 acres
- Applied 102 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Spread 140 pounds of seed to 23 acres
- Installed 4 signs signs
- Installed mile markers
- Installed garbage can
- Repaired sections of trail and rolled entire trail
- Site of 10 volunteer work days – activities included applying 14 gallons of herbicide, clearing .5 acres of woody invasives, spreading 11 pounds of seed to 2.5 acres, conducting a prescribed burn on 11.8 acres, pulling clover and garlic mustard and collecting seed
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments

Old School

- Botanical walk through with Ken Klick, Ecologist from the Lake County Forest Preserve to update plant inventory and vegetation monitoring – 5.15.14
- Conducted property inspections

River Road

- Applied 9.75 gallons of herbicide
- Repaired sections of trail and rolled entire trail
- Waukegan Park District completed Phase 2 of trail construction
- Installed 7 signs, 1 bollard, 1 bench, 1 garbage can and 1 knox box
- Conducted property inspections

Rt. 45

- Conducted prescribe burn on 2 acres at Bott Prairie
- Cleared debris and log jams from 300 feet of Bull Creek tributary – 8.11.14
- Botanical walk through at Bott with Ken Klick, Ecologist from the Lake County Forest Preserve to update plant inventory and vegetation monitoring – 5.15.14
- Held site visit with Liberty Prairie Foundation and Openlands – 10.27.14
- Conducted property inspections

Rt. 137

- Public open house held on the Rt. 137 Bull Creek Trail project – 3.20.14
- Began engineering and permitting phase of trail construction project
- Cleared 3 acres for trail corridor
- Installed 1 sign
- Sent trail project update letters to Timber Creek Subdivision, Wood Hollow and Bull Creek – November 24
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments

St. Mary's

- Applied 131.2 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Cleared 10 acres of invasive species
- Conducted prescribe burn on 24.5 acres
- Spread 430 pounds of seed on 37 acres
- Planted 4 trees
- Completed Trail Resurfacing Project
- Installed 120 feet of split rail fence
- Installed 1 sign, 1 garbage can, 1 bench, 1 bollard and 1 knox box
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments

Lindholm Park

- Conducted prescribed burn on 0.1 acres
- Planted 2 trees
- Applied 79.5 gallons of herbicide
- Spread 65 pounds of seed on .8 acres
- Planted 200 plugs on .5 acres
- Spread 20 yards of mulch
- Installed 150 feet of split rail fence
- Site of Girl Scout Troop #40407 native planting project
- Added 2 tons of turface to ball fields – 4.23.14
- On site meeting with Lake County Forest Preserve District and Lake County Stormwater Management Commission to discuss drainage issues – 7.18.14
- Conducted property and playground inspections

Seasonal Maintenance Activities**Winter:**

- Clearing of buckthorn and other invasive trees
- Burning of brush piles
- Monthly Volunteer Work Day

- Open Space employees assist with snow removal in the unincorporated areas of Libertyville Township
- Open Space employees assist with the maintenance of Township grounds.
- Assist with food pantry activities as needed.

Spring:

- Herbiciding invasive plants
- Planting native species
- Trail maintenance and repairs
- Burning is done on a rotating basis during March and April. Sites are prioritized and are burned in accordance with the prescribed burn management plan.
- Clean and inspect water control structures for wetlands – close for the spring
- Weekly activities: mowing, weed whacking, raking of baseball diamonds
- Monthly Volunteer Work Day
- Open Space employees assist with the maintenance of Township grounds.
- Assist Road District in weather related events as needed
- Assist with food pantry activities as needed

Summer:

- Grading of dirt along trail edges
- Herbiciding invasive plants
- Trail maintenance and repairs
- Weekly activities: mowing, weed whacking, raking of baseball diamonds
- Monthly Volunteer Work Day
- Open Space employees assist with the maintenance of Township grounds
- Assist with food pantry activities as needed

Fall:

- Seed collection
- Planting native species
- Herbiciding invasive plants
- Trail maintenance and repairs
- Clean and inspect water control structures for wetlands – open for fall
- Burning is done on a rotating basis during the month of November. Sites are prioritized and are burned in accordance with the prescribed burn management plan
- Weekly activities: mowing, weed whacking, raking of baseball diamonds
- Monthly Volunteer Work Day
- Open Space employees assist with the maintenance of Township grounds
- Assist with food pantry activities as needed

Public Communication and Outreach

C. Slago co-presented at the Volunteer Herbicide Training Class – January 11, 2014

D. Cederberg and C. Slago attended on site meeting with Lewis Nicols from National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) – January 16, 2014

Two public open houses were held on the Casey Road Land Use project – February 20 and June 19

Approval and adoption of the Casey Road Land Use Plan – November 13, 2014

Public open house held on the Rt. 137 Bull Creek Trail project – March 20, 2014

Libertyville Township approved Inter Governmental Agreement with Mundelein Park District to partner with prescribed burn activity – March 27, 2014

K. O'Connor attended Bull Creek Bulls Brook Watershed Council meetings – April 23, August 28 and November 20, 2014

D. Cederberg and C. Slago attend Bull Creek Bulls Brook Watershed Council meeting – August 28, 2014

K. O'Connor, D. Cederberg, and C. Slago participated in monthly ad hoc Casey Road Land Use Advisory Committee meetings.

K. O'Connor participated in the Lake County Local Food Working Group – January 14, April 15, and October 28, 2014

K. O'Connor served on the ComEd Green Region Advisory Grant Committee.

Professional Development

D. Cederberg and C. Slago attend *ITEA* Seminar – March 14, 2014

D. Cederberg received training in CPR, AED and First Aid – March 25, 2014

C. Slago received training in CPR and AED – March 25, 2014

C. Cederberg, A. Rodriguez and C. Slago attended Sandbagging Workshop sponsored by Lake County Division of Transportation, Lake County Stormwater Management Commission and Lake County Emergency Management – April 3, 2014

D. Cederberg, C. Slago, and the seasonal employees toured the Dead Dog Creek Restoration project – June 23, 2014

D. Cederberg and C. Slago attended the International Society Arbor Culture Conference in Milwaukee – August 5, 2014

D. Cederberg attended Deicing Workshop sponsored by Lake County Stormwater Management Commission and Lake County Health Department & Community Center – October 7, 2014

D. Cederberg attended the Illinois Arborist Conference in Tinley Park – October 21 & 22, 2014