



Open Space 2016 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. Conserve Lake County links the Township to grant opportunities, coordinates volunteer work days and provides professional assistance in a variety of areas.

Special Projects

Atkinson Tree Removal Project

Libertyville Township engaged Advanced Tree Care to remove 75 hazardous trees from the Township's Atkinson Road Property. The trees presented a hazard because of their proximity to homes and the trail.

Bull Creek Trail Construction Project

Libertyville Township completed construction of the Rt. 137 Bull Creek Trail Connector Project. The trail connection provides a critical link to the regional trail system. The project was a partnership between the Township, the Village of Libertyville and Commonwealth Edison as portions of the trail will be constructed on each of our properties. Pearson, Brown & Associates, Inc. provided engineering services and Team REIL, Inc. was awarded the construction contract. The trail was completed in June 2016 with a Trail Opening Celebration held on July 21, 2016. In addition, the Lake County Audubon Society received several grants on behalf of the Township to assist in the restoration efforts and improve bird habitat.

Bluebird Nest Boxes Project

A Libertyville High School Eagle Scout installed bluebird nest boxes at Canterbury for his Eagle Scout project. A total of 6 bluebird nest boxes were installed with assistance provided by Libertyville Township Open Space staff.

Casey Road Farmland Restoration Project

The Township has started the implementation phase of the Casey Road Land Use Plan with technical support provided by Conserve Lake County. Activities have included: water & soil sampling, surveying & legal descriptions, baseline photos, hedgerow removal, drain tile removal, seed purchase & planting of oak trees. The hedgerow removal has created nearly 70 uninterrupted acres of habitat.

Red-tailed Hawk Nesting Platform Project

A student from the Prairie Crossing Charter School installed a Red-Tailed Hawk nesting platform at the Canterbury property with assistance from Libertyville Township Open Space staff.

River Road Fire Training

In 2016, Libertyville Township acquired a parcel with a home on the property as part of a land swap transaction. The Township contacted Waukegan Fire Department offered the site as a location for a burn training. The joint project allowed the Township to reduce the cost in the demolition of the home and provided a unique fire training opportunity for the Waukegan, Libertyville and Gurnee Fire Departments.

Volunteer Herbicide Class for Open Space Volunteers

On January 9, 2016, Libertyville Township and Conserve Lake County partnered to provide an herbicide training class to 19 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

A majority of the Volunteer Work Days are held the second Saturday of each month from 9:00 to Noon at Oak Openings or Liberty Prairie. Those work days are a coordinated effort between the Township and Conserve Lake County. In addition, the work days were held on other township properties. In 2016, the Township held 17 volunteer work days with participation from 104 individual volunteers. 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 2016, the Township completed the following monitoring activities:

- Brennan Easement – Completed annual easement monitoring on May 6, 2016.
- Bott Easement – Completed annual easement monitoring on September 12, 2016.
- Getz Easement – This easement covers three separate properties. Separate baselines have been created for each property. In 2016, all 3 properties were purchased by a single owner.
 - Completed annual easement monitoring for Getz 1 on September 12, 2016.
 - Completed annual easement monitoring for Getz 2 on September 12, 2016.
 - Completed annual easement monitoring for Getz 3 on September 12, 2016.
- Maxey Easement – Completed annual easement monitoring on May 6, 2016.
- Bleck Easement – In 2016, the Township met with family members of the property owner of the conservation easement to discuss the Township's desire to begin monitoring of the conservation easement.

Site Specific Activities

In 2016, the Libertyville Township Open Space District applied approximately 2,694.5 gallons of herbicide, planted 284 trees & shrubs, removed 23 dead or dying trees, spread approximately 673 pounds of seed, cleared 5 acres of invasive trees, planted 818 plugs, 30 brush piles burned and conducted prescribed burns on 113.1 acres. These numbers will fluctuate based on each property's needs over time.

Atkinson

- Land and Water Resources and Applied Ecological Services continued restoration efforts on mitigation bank
- Applied 24.5 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments
- Contacted Advanced Tree Care to remove 75 dead or dying trees from the site.
- Installed signage as needed
- Reconstructed trail was monitored following rain events for potential drainage issues

Butterfield/Canterbury

- Applied 520.5 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Planted 13 trees
- Conducted a prescribe burn on 110.3 acres
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments
- Installed 6 Bluebird nest boxes and 1 Red-tailed Hawk nesting platform
- Spread 56 lbs. of seed on 5 acres
- Burned 1 brush pile
- Repaired sections of trail and rolled entire trail
- Removed 10 hazardous trees
- Installed signage as needed

Casey North/Oak Openings

- Applied 86.24 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments
- Disabled 365 feet of drain tile
- Planted 13 shrubs
- Installed new kiosk sign
- Removed 44 dead/dying trees
- Repaired sections of trail and rolled entire trail
- Site of 9 volunteer work days (8 Saturday & 1 mid-week) activities included applying herbicide, spreading 10 pounds of seed to 1 acre, removing invasive species and collecting 20 lbs. of seed
- Wetland delineation
- Held Volunteer Work Days: 2/13, 3/12, 5/14, 6/28, 8/13, 11/12 & 12/10
- Applied for grants and explored other funding opportunities to support restoration activities

Casey South/Liberty Prairie

- Applied 493.26 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Burned 7 brush piles
- Cleared 2 acres of invasive species
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments
- Disabled 907 ft. of drain tile
- Removed 5 hazardous trees
- Spread 220 pounds of seed to 12.7 acres
- Repaired sections of trail and rolled entire trail
- Held Volunteer Work Days: 4/9, 5/14, 6/11, 7/9, 8/16, 9/10, 10/8 & 10/11
- Applied for grants and explored other funding opportunities to support restoration activities

Kildare

- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments

Milwaukee Road

- Applied 42.5 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Conducted a prescribe burn on 1.5 acres
- Conducted property inspections

Lindholm Park

- Applied 240.13 gallons of herbicide

Lindholm Park (con't.)

- Conducted prescribed burn on .3 acres
- Conducted playground inspection – October 4, 2016
- Conducted property inspections
- Installed 10 feet of fencing
- Installed knox box and porta potty

Old School

- Applied 3 gallons of herbicide
- Conducted property inspections
- Held Volunteer Work Day – November 15, 2016

River Road

- Applied 85.5 gallons of herbicide
- Conducted property inspections
- Disabled well & septic at house
- Installed signage as needed
- Installed 30 ft. of split rail fence
- Trail maintenance
- Waukegan Fire Department conducted house fire training - October 4, 2016

Rt. 45

- Applied 2.5 gallons of herbicide
- Conducted prescribe burn on 1 acre
- Conducted property inspections

Rt. 137

- Applied 292.81 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Burned 14 brush piles
- Cleared 3.5 acres
- Completed construction of Bull Creek Trail
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments
- Installed 7 sections of fencing
- Installed 22 signs, 2 garbage cans & 2 dog waste centers
- Planted 818 plugs
- Planted 250 trees and shrubs
- Removed 2 hazardous trees
- Spread 234 lbs. of seed to trail corridor
- Volunteer Work Days held: 10/22 & 11/5

St. Mary's

- Applied 500.27 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Burned 16 brush piles
- Cleared 5 acres of invasive species
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments
- Installed signage as needed
- Planted 6 trees
- Spread 183 pounds of seed to 6 acres

Township Grounds

- Applied 20 lbs of seed to 2 acres
- Applied 193.33 gallons of herbicide to invasive species

Winchester Rd/Libertyville Township Soccer Complex (LTSC)

- Applied 6 gallons of herbicide to invasive species
- Removed 2 hazardous trees
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments

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

J. Happ served on the Bull Creek Bulls Brook Watershed Council Board

K. O'Connor served as Chair for the Bull Creek Bulls Brook Watershed Council

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

K. O'Connor presented an update on the Open Space District at the Liberty Prairie Homeowners Association Meeting – March 8, 2016

K. O'Connor attended Conserve Lake County's Annual Meeting – April 20, 2016

D. Cederberg & J. Happ provided Girl Scout Troop a tour of the building and presentation on the Open Space District – April 29, 2016

K. O'Connor presented "Tell It in 10 – An Update on the Open Space District" at the Des Plaines River Watershed Meeting – June 1, 2016

K. O'Connor & S. Surroz from Conserve Lake County presented "Casey Road Farmland Restoration Project" at the Des Plaines River Watershed Meeting – October 12, 2016

Professional Development

D. Cederberg and J. Happ attended conservation easement monitoring webinar training at Conserve Lake County – March 9, 2016

D. Cederberg and J. Happ attended Restoration Symposium at the Botanic Gardens – June 12, 2016

D. Cederberg and J. Happ became certified flaggers – June 24, 2016

D. Cederberg & J. Happ attended the North America Prairie Conference – July 18 – 20, 2016

D. Cederberg, J. Happ & K. O'Connor attended Bull Creek Bull's Brook Watershed Council Meetings – February 17, June 18, & September 17, 2016

D. Cederberg attended the Illinois Arborist Association Conference – October 20 & 21, 2016

D. Cederberg and J. Happ obtained CDL-A driver's license – December 2016