

2008 Report of the Director
James Woodworth Prairie (JWP) of University of Illinois at Chicago
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Highlights of 2008

A highlight of 2008 was two girl scouts organizing projects at the prairie as part of earning a Gold Award. One scout's project focused on removing asphalt and other debris that had been dumped in the prairie and the other scout's project focused on cutting and herbiciding dogwood, a native woody species that threatens the prairie. Another highlight was additional photographic images from Frank Mayfield. There is a winter panorama on the web and another pair that show the growth and blooming patterns thru a series of shots from the same place at different times. The state of Illinois has continued to cut money to UIC and even the small prairie budget has been further cut. The Bernice Popelka fund has provided much needed resources, but continuing to stay open almost every day of the summer was only possible after a gift was received from Howard and Moira Buhse. The Buhse's have help the prairie regularly since the budget reductions of 2003. 2008 had the highest total rainfall of any year since O'Hare was the official weather station.

Research

1. The project to enhance the population of *Lilium michiganense* north of the Milwaukee swale continued. Jodi Leamon reduced the neighbors of the lily in some plots. We collected data on 100 separate square meters again in 2008. Either the location of the lily shoots changes fairly dramatically from year-to-year, or we messed up our records. At this point the subplot changes are too erratic to come to a conclusion. In 2008 a lily bloomed just outside our study plot.
2. I continue to accumulate data on first blooming dates and to look for new species. Though I did not see it, Frank Mayfield photographed Ironweed, *Vernonia fasciculata*, at the prairie. That is a new addition to the plant species list.
3. Ravi Patel, an undergraduate honors student, got the 1979-1987 grid inventory data into a spreadsheet and added the 2005 data.

Management

1. On 5 April 08 north half was burned. The planned fall burn did not happen but we burned a large pile of dogwood stems in the parking lot.
2. On 5 April 08 the girl scouts began their Gold Award project.
3. I continued some effort of trapping medium sized mammals and removing them from the site. I also trapped 3 voles and moved them from the site.
4. 2008 involved a focus on dogwood, *Cornus racemosa*. Patches of this species were cut at ground level and herbicided. Much of that effort was done by the scouts seeking the Gold Award. They recruited and organized younger scouts and friends from high school.
5. Garden work focused on the west (main) entrance steps, especially north of those steps. I failed to put up shade cloth and many of the seedlings I transplanted to the garden could not take the full sun and died. I got some *Agalinis tenuifolia* into the IC garden, but only a couple plants flowered.
6. Matt Dickinson, undergraduate doing BioS 391 project, removed the asphalt from the path near the rain gage and removed some of the concrete blocks north of the Interpretation Center.
7. I began to reduce the population of the Daisy fleabane and the Marsh avens by cutting the stems of these aggressive annuals and biennials.
8. Work continued on sifting soil –removing rocks and debris and returning soil to holes in the prairie.

Education and outreach

1. The spring potluck was held on 16 May and the fall potluck on 8 Nov. The fall potluck included a couple of students from BioS 432, Restoration Ecology. Both had over a dozen attendees.

2. Victor Cassidy, noted author of the biography of a famous ecologist, Henry Chandler Cowles, served as a guide and interpreter.
3. Mark Krivchenia, whose avocation is natural areas, joined the UIC staff as a 'intellectual property' person and was given a tour of the prairie.
4. The website has been significantly changed with new photographic material from Frank Mayfield and the incorporation of various logos from UIC. The prairie is attempting to have the video produced by Paul and Albert Rouffa available thru a streaming server.

Building and grounds

1. There has been more dumping of branches into the prairie by crews using the utility poles north of the fence. This year it appeared to have been done by Comcast.
2. Old former incubator being used as a refrigerator was removed and a new refrigerator was brought to the prairie. A TV was also donated to the prairie.
3. After the almost 10" of rain in one week in September, a tile came down from the roof and the insect display case was discovered to have water damage including mold growth. Most component of the exhibit had to be thrown away. UIC has been notified and has sent people out to investigate the origin of the leak.
4. The corner fence post of the entrance looked like it had been run into by a car in July. I made various inquiries but got no response. In October the U of I central administration contacted UIC because an insurance company contacted them. The fence post got fixed in NOV.

Effort details

From 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008, I was at JWP on 50 different dates.

6 February 2009