

2009 Report of the Director
James Woodworth Prairie (JWP) of University of Illinois at Chicago
Dennis Nyberg, Department of Biological Sciences

Highlights of 2009

Highlights of 2009: A focus on wetlands with 1) removal of concrete blocks that have sat in the prairie since before UIC owned it & 2) scything of the Indian Hemp that dominated RAINPOST with 3) continued progress on dogwood elimination by the staff and on two volunteer workdays organized by Jodi Leamon, who earned her MS in 2009.

Research

1. For the last 3 years I have reported on the 'project to enhance the population of *Lilium michiganense* north of the Milwaukee swale' and this year we had a lily blooming within our plot. 2009 was, however, a very good year for the Turk's cap lily throughout the prairie and I saw more blooms this year than the previous 3-5 years combined. Even after 3 years we don't have statistically significant evidence that reducing local competition has helped the lilies, but the trend suggests it has.
2. I did see the Ironweed that Frank Mayfield had photographed in 2008, but no new species were seen. Three individuals of a species that has not been seen for a few years, *Spiranthes magnicamporum*, bloomed in 2009.
3. Details of the hydrology were considerably improved by recording flow patterns during a heavy spring rain. Much water drains out the driveway into Milwaukee Ave and into a sewer.

Management

1. On 4 April 09 east half of the prairie was burned. The plan was to burn the west half, but the wind was from the east, so we had to change the plan to keep from creating a problem along Milwaukee Ave. On 18 April 09 the area surrounding RAINPOST was burned. April 18 is the latest I have burned.
2. 2009 continued the focus on dogwood, *Cornus racemosa*, begun in 2008. Many patches, especially east of the parking lot and NE of the IC, of this species were cut at ground level and herbicided by MJ and Don and the volunteers recruited by Jodi. A pile of cut dogwood remains in the parking lot, but hopefully will be burned before we open to the public.
3. Garden work continued to focus on the west (main) entrance steps, especially north of those steps. I put up shade cloth this year. I did some garden work in the SW corner. In the NW area more poison ivy and pasture rose were dug out.
4. Jodi Leamon organized two volunteer workdays that focused on cutting dogwood. Due to a population of students from Dave Rodgers Oakton College class a reasonably large number of workers helped.
5. Andrew Athens worked on removal of concrete slabs (most approximately 1m x 1m x 0.15m) that had been bulldozed into the south edge of the Milwaukee swale. (In 2008 Matt Dickinson and Jodi had exposed many of those concrete chunks by removing sod that had grown over them.) Andrew purchased and donated to the prairie a 16 lb sledge and six of these slabs were broken into pieces that could be carried and loaded into the dumpster.
6. Soil removed during the concrete removal was sifted –removing rocks and debris which was put in dumpster while screened soil was returned to holes in the prairie.

Education and outreach

1. The spring potluck was held on 9 May. Fifteen people attended. A highlight for me was that Dr. Howard Buhse presented me a book honoring my 10th year as JWP Director.
2. On 16 May the MIT club of Chicago toured the prairie. The group included about a dozen adults plus 3 youths. In addition five colleagues from the Department of Biological Sciences joined the

tour. Weather was favorable and participants seemed to enjoy the tour.

3. The website has continued to change, primarily with new photographic material from frank@black-sweater-art.com. Frank Mayfield has made a book, Abundant Splendor, which has been custom published but is looking for a publisher with a distribution system. A poster of the flowers in Abundant Splendor has also been prepared by Frank Mayfield.

Building and grounds

1. This year there was dumping of tires, metal and honeysuckle stems into the prairie. I talked to the person living in the house. They said they were renting and I inferred the dumping had been done by a cleanup crew hired by the bank.
2. The refrigerator was brought in 2008 no longer has a working light (not just the bulb) and that significantly reduces its utility.
3. There was no further water damage inside the building, but the damage done in 2008 has not been repaired/replaced.
4. Surveyors were present in the prairie in 2009. They said the McDonalds to the south would be torn down and rebuilt with improved drainage as a major rationale.

Effort details

From 1 January 2009 thru 31 December 2009, I was at JWP on 46 different dates.