

2011 Report of the Director
James Woodworth Prairie (JWP) of University of Illinois at Chicago
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Highlights of 2011

2011 was a year in which progress came in big steps. The ones I think were most exciting were: 1) Publication of Saving Peacock Prairie by Bernice Popelka, 2) Publication of Elusive Splendor by Frank Mayfield, 3) Cutting and herbiciding of almost all remaining dogwood, 4) Painting of outside of building, 5) Cutting and herbiciding of cattails in MIL, 6) cutting of almost all woody stems protruding thru the North Fence.

Details by Subject

Research & Conditions

Paul Gulezian continued mark/recapture studies of the prairie cicada population. Dr. John Cooley, a cicada expert visited JWP and took a couple specimens. I, unfortunately, learned that my capacity to detect sing cicadas has declined considerably in last 3 years. 2011 was the 2nd wettest year recorded in Chicago and there was water over 90% of the year. On the INPS hike a new small white ladies slipper was discovered near the east fence. There are now at least 4 individual ladies slippers one of which produced a seed pod in 2011.

Management

Victor Cassidy volunteered to reduce the over-abundant Silphium in the IC Garden. He cut the leaves throughout the garden. The leaves were put onto patches that were bare of vegetation after dogwood cutting and herbiciding. The Silphium leaves will serve as mulch and/or fuel. Paul, MJ and Don pretty much finished the dogwood reduction project that we have been working on for a few years. The large patch near the RAINPOST wetland and a patch around G6 were pretty bare after dogwood were cut and herbicided. The RAINPOST patch was planted in the fall with a couple dozen prairie plants (dug from DN's yard) and both patches were seeded with seeds from the prairie. Both got mulch. Paul mowed and herbicided the cattails in the Milwaukee swale (MIL) during the early July dry period. The few survivors/resprouts were cut and herbicided when MIL dried out in OCT. The south half of the prairie was burnt in 2011 on 9 Apr (with dogwood stem brush pile within unit near RAINPOST) and on 14 Apr. Making a brush pile with cut woody vegetation has worked well so far. The remaining part of *Phragmites* was dug up. Reed canary grass near MIL was sprayed; populations along the N fence persist. Mike Tuttle and I cut all the woody stems protruding through the N fence, hoping to get quality prairie closer to that fence. The large mower we share with the Grove is now at JWP. Debris (rock and concrete) from 3355 Thornberry was dumped into the prairie. The real estate agent agreed to clean it up, but we never got a time that worked for both of us and I removed the debris when finishing the N fence stem cutting in Dec. I

purchased and planted in the IC garden 20 *Hypoxis hirsuta* seedlings from James McGee. I added soil (mostly from MIL and generated during concrete removal) to the 4-5 holes in the prairie.

Education and outreach

Bernice Popelka wrote a book about the effort to save the Peacock Prairie. Her book Saving Peacock Prairie was the feature of a 13 June open house attended by a large number of individuals, including Debra Shore, WRD Commissioner, Steve Swanson, Director of the Grove, and other friends from the past. Frank Mayfield followed up the publication of Abundant Splendor with an exhibit at the Glenview Public Library and at UIC Campus Union pictures from Elusive Splendor. Elusive Splendor is a book of photographs of the rare species of JWP. JWP had a potluck on 14 May. I gave an INPS (Illinois Native Plant Society) walk 22 May which normally is late for optimum spring flora but in 2011 was just right. Erin Faulkner ran a plant ID class at JWP on 23 July. Frank Mayfield and I talked at Glenview Public Library on 2 Aug.

Building and grounds

We continued the spraying of the driveway and parking lot with herbicide to prevent the growth of weeds thru or on top of the pavement. MJ Ghiselli finished fixing up the water damaged exhibits, despecially the insect case. The outside of the Interpretation Center (IC) was painted in the fall after the prairie was closed to public.

Site Management

DW Nyberg retired as a UIC faculty member, but continues thru Aug 2012 as Director of JWP. In a similar situation Al Rouffa was asked to continue as Director for many years and I regard it likely I will be asked to continue as Director, but the future of JWP leadership has uncertainty. I expect to be hiring many new guides to replace Paul Gulezian, PhD, who worked many days in 2011.

Effort details

DWN was at the prairie site 13,675 minutes spread among 54 days in 2011.