

Erie MetroParks

Edison Woods 2006 Environmental Projects Summary Brad Phillips, Env Proj. Coord.

Field and Meadows Project

Late in 2002, the 300 plus acres of formerly farmed fields at Edison Woods were planted to native grasses and forbs. Sixty species were utilized in these plantings, distributed according to moisture regimes. This is a continuing report on the status of these plantings.

Spring burns were conducted in 11 of 18 fields. Overall burn results were excellent. In 2007 controlled burns will focus on those areas which have been slower to establish, or which have not yet been burned. Maintenance of planted species and suppression of woody species will be an emphasis.

Plant surveys of the fields in 2005 detected 226 vascular species within the eighteen planted fields. Of these, 52 species came from the planted matrix, 76 were unplanted native forbs, 61 were alien forbs, two were native fern allies, and 35 were young woody species. Overall cover is increasing for the planted grasses. Most of the alien forbs are not competitive with the planted species. Exceptions include sweet clover (*Melilotus officinalis*), alsike clover (*Trifolium hybridum*), and small patches of reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*). Narrow-leaf cattail (*Typha angustifolia*) is found uncommonly in several wet zones. Small patches of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) are appearing and will need to be controlled.

Of the planted grasses, both Indian-grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) and Big Blue-stem (*Andropogon gerardii*) are becoming dominant in the mesic to wet-mesic areas. Canada Wild-rye is widespread in low amounts. Prairie Cord-grass (*Spartina pectinata*), Blue-joint (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), and Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) are the grass species which dominate the wetter areas. Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) is still uncommon, confined to the drier areas of fields.

The planted species do appear to be becoming dominant and outcompeting the volunteer species, both native and alien, which might contribute to the lower total of species found. Another factor is greatly reduced time spent surveying in 2006.

Spot spraying of Canada Thistle (*Cirsium canadense*) and Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) was conducted, as in prior years. Teasel continues to have a minor presence in several fields. Autumn Olive (*Eleaegnus umbellata*) was dug out when detected, primarily in 3 fields. No Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) was found in 2006.

Other Projects

A new trail was created near the northeast corner of the property, and is called the North Creek Trail. It includes a small bridge over one branch of Cranberry Creek. It is accessed from the North Ridge Trail. A deck was built by the parking lot on St.Rt.61, and additional boardwalk was installed at the beginning of the Adventure Walkway. Wetland banking mitigation funding allowed the start of a project to restore wetlands in the central core of the property. Tiles were broken and ditches were dammed to raise the overall water table in and around the north and south meadows, now renamed the north and south wetlands.