



Dayton Bluffs Year Three Report

The Conservation Foundation and Friends of Dayton Bluffs
2013-2016

It's been a great three years of work at the Dayton Bluffs Preserve in Ottawa!

An amazing amount of work was completed on restoration of the woodlands and former farm fields, and general clean-up and public awareness of the property. **The volunteers with the Friends of Dayton Bluffs have been amazing!** And, a few nice amenities were also added so people can now access and enjoy the preserve.



Here are some highlights from the beginning:

- 2013: Purchase of the property for approx. \$2 million, July 2013
- 2014
 - Started woodland brush clearing and prairie restoration activities
 - Started volunteer work days and public tours/open houses
 - City of Ottawa approved annexation and lease agreements
 - Held FairmountSantröl restoration work day with more than 500 employees
 - Successfully obtained challenge grant, raising more than \$31,000 total for restoration
- 2015
 - Conducted first woodland burns on approx. 15 acres
 - Cleaned up Native American burial mounds area
 - Formally established Friends of Dayton Bluffs volunteer group
 - Trained volunteers in pesticide and chainsaw safety, and prescribed burns
- 2016
 - Started ravine restoration and erosion control
 - Volunteers constructed informational kiosk in parking area
 - Volunteer appreciation picnic held by City of Ottawa and TCF to honor volunteers
 - Started site master planning process for trails and other improvements
 - Phase 1 restoration nearly completed with initial removal of invasive woody species
 - Conducted first prairie burns and collected several pounds of prairie seeds



Three-Year Site Accomplishments

- Cleared invasive species from 150 acres of woodlands; planted 90 acres to prairie.
- Majority of invasive infested areas have been cut and treated.
- Cleared nearly 5 miles of woodland edge to open it up.
- Removed 2 tons of trash from ravines.
- Added the following amenities: 6 picnic tables, a tool shed, 100 loppers, small foot bridge over creek, entrance road and parking area, utility vehicle.
- Cleaned up the pioneer cemetery and historic barn foundation at north end of property; vols. participated in mandated State training and after receiving a permit, located, cleaned and erected grave markers.



Volunteers and Public Support

- **Friends of the Dayton Bluffs** formally established to help with restoration and other cleanup activities tallying more than 5,000 hours.
- Approx. \$15,000 of in-kind services provided by area companies and professionals.
- Fairmount Santrol volunteer work day produced 2,000 hours of volunteer work valued at \$27,000
- Nice article in *Starved Rock Country* magazine and coverage in several local media outlets



Funding

- Initial acquisition funding provided by Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, Grand Victoria Foundation and the Hamill Family Foundation- approx. \$2 million
- More than \$200,000 has been raised additionally in donations, grants and pledges so far for restoration and clean up activity.
- Nearly \$200,000 has been spent on restoration, clean up and related activity.

A Big Thank You to our Friends and Partners!

- Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation
- Grand Victoria Foundation
- Hamill Family Foundation
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- City of Ottawa, especially Mayor Bob Eschbach and councilmen Dan Aussem and James Less
- Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, IDNR
- The Pizzo Companies
- Christopher B. Burke Engineering
- Bedrock Earthscapes
- Operating Engineers Local 150
- Illinois Valley Contractors Association
- Ruiz Construction
- Etscheid, Duttlinger & Associates, Inc.
- Grand Rapids Excavating
- Universal Paving & Excavating
- D Construction
- FairmountSantrol/Wedron Silica
- Jerry Halterman and Dan Reynolds
- Tom Heimsoth and Heritage Harbor
- Ottawa Visitors Center
- LaSalle County Master Naturalists
- Marcia Nelson, great neighbor and friend
- *Starved Rock Country* magazine
- Iowa and Minnesota Conservation Corps
- V3 Environmental Consultants
- Tangled Roots Brewing Company
- All of our wonderful volunteers and donors



Controlled woodland burn.



Volunteers at a Saturday work day.