

Best Practices for Native Prairie Management

LCCMR Project 2008 – 2010

Project Summary

The 2004 LCMR Parks Study and the 2003–2008 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) recommended better coordination among Minnesota's outdoor recreation providers. This project addressed these recommendations by engaging public and private outdoor recreation leaders to transform better coordination into shared knowledge and practices.

Two native prairie demonstration projects will identify best management practices and maintenance methodologies as the sites continue to mature. The first native prairie demonstration area is located within Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve in East Bethel, Minnesota. One-half of the area was mowed, and one-half was burned prior to seeding. This 23-acre demonstration area features five treatments: burn/broadcast seed; burn/drill seed; mow/broadcast seed; mow/drill seed; and forb plantings.

The second native prairie demonstration project is located within two city parks in Hutchinson, Minnesota. The two areas' objectives were to restore turf back to native prairie, and to further an oak savanna restoration. This approximately 10-acre demonstration area (total acreage within the two sites) features four treatments: drill seed near lowland river area; broadcast seed near high-ground river area; hand-seed; and over-seeding of a continued restoration project.

Three regional workshops were conducted to exchange information and techniques used during the demonstrations, and overall native prairie best practices. The first regional workshop focused on native prairie impacts, research, and reconnecting children to nature. Session content included biodiversity and its impacts on prairie ecosystems; bioenergy; climate; productivity and resistance to drought, disease, and pests; and reconnecting children with the native environment by teaching them the value of the native prairies, lands, and waterways.

The second regional workshop was designed to gather a cross-section of professionals to discuss strategies and solutions for best practices in native prairie management. Session content included best practices in native prairie management from numerous perspectives: engineering, wildlife, natural resources, park resources, and water resources. Workshop presenters also provided information on partnerships, stormwater program and vegetation, prairie maintenance, prairie seed installation, and forestry inventories.

The third regional workshop centered on small and large suburban native prairie areas. Session content included prairie and native plant/tree protection and restoration; and

agricultural development that has been one of the largest sources of local habitat removal with current efforts to restore these prairies to their original native habitats. Workshop presenters also provided information on efforts to convert 600 acres of former agricultural land to native prairie and wetland.

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