

## Green Fund Project Final Report

This report may be published on the SIU Sustainability website.

Name of person(s) completing report:

Identify if the person completing report is a student, faculty, and/or staff:

Department:

Contact Phone and email address:

Faculty Advisor (if applicable):

Project Title:

Multi-Use Trail Project at Touch of Nature

Project ID #: 19SP121

Award Date: 4/30/2019

Completion Date:

Total Funds Used:

1. Provide a summary of your project/project experience.

**Botany survey:** The Botany Survey conducted by Chris Benda revealed several species of interest within the proposed trail corridor, including one endangered plant species Running Buffalo Clover (*Trifolium reflexum*). The survey results allowed for the trail to be rerouted around these sensitive plant species, potentially preserving them intact. The survey further provides baseline data for future botanical surveys and research along the trail corridor, and in other parts of touch of nature.

**Additional funding:** While we did not receive the funding to provide for a graduate assistant for this project, funds were made available to further sustainability goals related to the Multi Use Trail Project. These funds were used to clear trail corridor of non-native invasive plant species. Student workers completed these tasks, adding to their educational experience in land management, while improving the overall quality of the trails.

2. Provide a summary of your results (environmental, social, and/or economic) including quantifiable data as appropriate (ex. # of individuals reached, lbs. diverted from landfill, energy saved, etc.).

**Botanical survey:** The botany survey was conducted over 7 miles of trail, covering the areas in and around the proposed trail corridor. 489 plant species were observed including one federally endangered species and a rare plant species.

Recommended actions included trail reroutes around 16 different sites. These reroutes were completed using data and flag indicators from the botanical survey.

**Non-Native Invasive Plant Removal:** During the invasive species removal process, student workers at touch of nature removed invasive plants along 3.30 miles of trail, to a corridor width of 20 feet. Invasive plants were identified, cut at their base, and treated with an herbicide to prevent regrowth. These actions were taken in accordance with the Touch of Nature Forest Management plan, and under the consultation of the SIU Forestry department and other forestry professionals. A certified applicator oversaw all use and storage of chemicals.

3. Summarize how your project promoted the Green Fee/Sustainability on campus including, but not limited to, flyers created, screenshots of website, signage, etc. Please include website links, if applicable. (Reminder: you are required to promote your project using at least 2 items from the awardee website promotion list.)

The ongoing growth and development of this project is due in large part to the Green Fund. We promote as an essential partner on our web page at <https://ton.siu.edu/touch-of-nature-forest/multi-use-trail-projects.php>.

4. Provide evidence of how you used the Green Fund Marker in your project. The green fund markers is posted in a prominent location on the Touch of Nature website. <https://ton.siu.edu/touch-of-nature-forest/multi-use-trail-projects.php>

5. Is there anything you would do differently if you were to do a similar project in the future? If so, please describe.

We believe that the sustained efforts of graduate assistants could benefit the continuity of this project, year to year. In the future, we hope to make a better effort to pursue funding for graduate assistants. The opportunities of student contributions and enrichment on this project are tremendous. We hope that the Green Fund will continue to make those opportunities available.

6. Provide as an attachment to the email (see email address below) a minimum of 5 digital images. A minimum of one of the five images should include a person. Images should be of high a quality as possible and be attached in jpg format, if available. Images will be used to promote interest in sustainability projects on campus and may be used on our website and in other promotional material. These can be photos of the progress of the project or the completed project. Provide captions for photos here.  
Images include process photos of endangered plant found during survey, student workers conduction invasive species removal, and the total mapped extent of the botanical survey.
7. In 2-5 sentences, describe what you learned from completing the Green Fund grant process. Include a detailed response (Do not simply respond "yes" or "no.") to at least one of the following questions to help us understand how this project has impacted your overall university experience.
  - Do you have a different understanding of sustainability now than you did at the beginning of the process?

We gained a lot of valuable insight into best practices of land management, and the rich natural resources here at Touch of Nature. The institutional memory of this project will benefit sustainability at Touch for years to come.

- Did you apply knowledge or skills learned from courses at SIU?

The several students and staff involved all had to rely on their SIU coursework, as well as each other to accurately identify plants, map accomplishments, and make recommendations for trail reroutes. Some of the course we referenced included Wildland Management, Geographic Information Systems, Tree Identification, Plants of Southern Illinois, and many others.

- Did the completion of the Green Fund grant process help to prepare you for your future career opportunities?

N/a

8. List suggestions for the SIU Sustainability Council to improve the Green Fund Award Process here:

Final Report forms should be sent electronically, in editable Microsoft Word format, to [greenfund@siu.edu](mailto:greenfund@siu.edu). This should be completed before requesting final reimbursement. A Sustainability Council designate will review final reports before releasing funds.