

SIU Sustainability Council Project
Final Report

Project title: Thompson Woods Herbaceous Restoration
Project I.D. #: 110305
Award date: 5/25/2011
Completion date: 4/16/2012
Funds used (if different from award amount): \$841

Brief write up of project/project experience (not to exceed 250 words):

This project focused on management of a portion of Thompson Woods near the Center for Environmental Health and Safety (CEHS). The area included a small wetland at the north end, where a diversity of native sedges and forbs were found. A culvert under Douglas Dr. hydrologically connects this area to the restored prairie managed by the Restoration Club at CEHS and to Campus Lake. After taking an inventory of the area, we proposed restoration of the area. This included the request of Green Funds for native seeds in order to bolster the native plant community, and planned activities to reduce the presence of invasive species.

We purchased seeds of 10 native species that were appropriate for the wetland and upland areas of the site. This is a reduction from the original proposed species list because we chose to focus on seeding larger quantities of native seed that would establish quickly to outcompete invasive species. Seeds were stratified as necessary, and spread in early spring of 2012.

During 2011 and spring 2012 we hosted numerous workdays where we hand-pulled invasive herbs like Garlic Mustard, and cut and applied herbicide to invasive shrubs like Autumn Olive, Bush Honeysuckle, and Multiflora Rose. We prepared the area for a burn, in partnership with the SIUC Fire Dawgs in March of 2012, but conditions in the spring were unfortunately not appropriate for burning.

Best things learned/produced from project:

We have learned that restoration of a complex of ecosystems (e.g., prairie, wetland, woodland) can result in a more comprehensive understanding of our local ecosystems

Restoration Club has primarily been involved with restoration of prairie ecosystems. This project provided an excellent educational opportunity for members to learn more about woodland and wetland restoration. From inventory of the site, to research on appropriate species for introduction, and creation of a plan for seeding and prescribed burning, we learned a great deal about ecological restoration in woodlands and wetlands. The project occurred at a time when questions of how best to manage Thompson Woods and Campus Lake Woods were being discussed by the SIU campus community; clearing of trees in the early spring of 2012 prompted discussion about how we use and manage our wooded systems. In addition to benefitting the

ecological community, our activities built momentum for the engagement of the campus community in management of our natural areas.

How do you define sustainability?

For our purposes, sustainability is defined ecologically – the ability of an ecosystem to sustain the diversity it harbors and the function it realizes over time.

Has this changed over the course of your project? If so, how?

Our definition has not changed over the course of this project.

What do you see as the next step for the project?

The next step for this project is for us to continue monitoring the diversity of the area and management of invasive species.

Optional: Do you have any suggestions for the SIU Sustainability Council to improve the Green Fund award process?

We do not have any suggestions, the process seemed appropriate.

Attach a minimum of five images – these will be used to promote interest in Sustainability Council projects. These can be photographs of the progress of the project, the completed project, or promotional materials.