



Open Space 2024 Annual Report

Libertyville Township Open Space District owns over 1,500 acres of Open Space. The Township has 4 full-time employees who are responsible for all maintenance and restoration efforts. In 2024, the Township applied 3,146 gallons of herbicide, sowed 700 pounds of native seed and collected 7.9 lbs. of native seed, conducted prescribed burns on 120 acres, rough-cut mowed 27 acres, cleared 11.62 acres of invasives, burned 50 brush piles, 1,500 plugs were planted, held 11 volunteer workdays, and 23 individuals volunteered.

Special Projects

Donnelley Prairies & Oaks Mitigation Bank Construction Project

In November 2023, construction of the Donnelley Prairies and Oaks Wetland Mitigation Bank broke ground. Hey & Associates, Inc. has provided the engineering service and technical assistance and HGS, LLC dba RES Environmental Operating Company, LLC is responsible for the construction and maintenance until the closeout of the bank. The work was completed mid-summer 2024. The project included the realignment of the trail, 17 water control berms, the disablement of 2.3 miles of drain tile, the installation of erosion control measures, and planting of native seed and plugs. All available first round of wetland mitigation credits have been sold which covered the cost of the construction of the bank and the realignment of the trail.

Kildare Ave Parcel Restoration Project

The nine-acre site was completely cleared of buckthorn, brush, and other invasive species. Restoration efforts continue with the sowing of 215.29 lbs of native seed and the planting of 500 plugs. Public access has been improved with an establishment of a mowed path and the installation of a bench, doggie bag dispenser, and a garbage can.

Rt. 45 Parcel Restoration Project

The Rt. 45 Parcel Restoration Project was not selected for a DCEO grant. The Township has been clearing of buckthorn and herbiciding invasive species.

Casey Trail Improvement Project

The Township engaged Pearson Brown and Associates for engineering to resurface the Casey Trail from Oak Openings to Liberty Prairie. The project will address the current erosion and washout issues the trail experiences during rain events. The project has received approval from the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission. It is anticipated that the work will begin Lake Summer/Fall of 2025.

Eagle Scout Projects

The Township served as sponsor for 3 separate Eagle Scout Projects. The projects were located on various open space parcels. The scope of the work included bird habitat, improved scenic views for trail users, and informational signage.

Plant and Wildlife Monitoring

The Open Space staff and volunteers monitor Threatened and Endangered plant species as well as wildlife on Township property. The plants monitored include Gentian, Grass-of-Parnassus, and Slender Bog Arrowgrass. The Township has installed, maintains and monitors 33 bluebird boxes and 6 hen houses. Volunteers and staff have observed Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, House Wrens, Bobolinks, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Dunlin, Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Mallard, Ducks, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Willet, Wood Thrush, Lesser Yellowlegs, Greater Yellowlegs, and Wilson's Phalarope.

Volunteer Herbicide Class for Open Space Volunteers

On January 20, 2024, Libertyville Township and Dave Eubanks from Eubanks Environmental partnered to provide an in-person herbicide training class to 7 volunteers interested in obtaining a volunteer herbicide license. The license allows open space volunteers to participate in herbicide activities under the supervision of Township staff and Dave Eubanks.

Volunteer Workdays

Most of the volunteer workdays are held the second Saturday of each month from 9:00 to Noon and are typically held at Oak Openings, Liberty Prairie, or Donnelley Oaks and Prairies. In 2024, the Township held 11 volunteer workdays which included 23 individual volunteers.

Conservation Easement Data

In 2010, Libertyville Township began documenting baselines and conducting annual monitoring for the conservation easements it holds on 6 privately owned properties. This provides an opportunity for the Township to partner with the landowners to ensure the integrity of each conservation easement is maintained. In 2024, the Township completed the following monitoring activities:

- Bleck Easement – During the construction of a barn, the site was regularly monitored. The annual easement monitoring was conducted on October 1, 2024.
- Bott Easement – Completed annual easement monitoring on October 3, 2024.
- Brennan Easement – Completed annual easement monitoring on November 5, 2024.
- Getz Easement – This easement covers three separate properties. Separate baselines have been created for each property. In 2016, all 3 properties were purchased by a single owner.
 - Completed annual easement monitoring for Getz 1 on October 1, 2024.
 - Completed annual easement monitoring for Getz 2 on October 1, 2024.
 - Completed annual easement monitoring for Getz 3 on October 1, 2024.
- Maxey Easement – Completed annual easement monitoring on September 30, 2024.
- Pritzker – Completed annual easement monitoring on November 5, 2024.

On October 1, 2024, Openlands conducted their annual monitoring of the easements they hold on Township property.

Site Specific Activities

In 2024, the Libertyville Township Open Space District applied 3,146 gallons of herbicide, collected 7.9lbs. of native seed, sowed approximately 706 lbs. of native seed, cleared 26 acres of invasive species, burned 50 brush piles, mowed 27 acres, planted 1,500 plugs, and conducted prescribed burns on 120 acres. These numbers will fluctuate based on each property's needs over time.

Atkinson

- Applied 121 gallons of herbicide to invasive species.
- Cleaned storm grate along the berm.
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments: January, March, May, July, September, and November.

- Installed and/or repaired signage as needed.
- Mowed trail edges.
- Mowed .86 acres.
- The trail was monitored following rain events for potential drainage issues.
- Removal of fallen and dead branches over trail.
- Removed 2 dead ash trees.
- Removed trash.
- Rolled trails as needed.
- Sealcoated trail.

Butterfield/Canterbury

- Applied 620.50 gallons of herbicide to invasive species.
- Collected 1lb. of native seed.
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments: February, May, July, September, and November.
- Cut fallen tree.
- Installed signage as needed.
- Installed 2 additional doggie bag dispensers.
- Planted one memorial tree.
- Mowed 1.93 acres.
- Removal of fallen and & dead branches over trail.
- Removed Seavey ditch log jam.
- Removed trash.
- Repaired memorial stone.
- Repaired sections of trail and rolled trail as needed.
- Carmel High School's April 6th Volunteer Workday. The group cut invasive brush.

Casey North/Oak Openings & Donnelley Prairies & Oaks

- Applied 612 gallons of herbicide to invasive species.
- Burned 15 brush piles.
- Cleared 2.7 acres.
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments: April, June, September, October, and December.
- Conducted a prescribed burn on 66.82 acres.
- Continued ongoing monitoring and maintenance of 319 grant: biannual inspections, mowing, and herbicide applications as needed.
- Installed firebreak.
- Installed signage as needed.
- Maintenance and repairs to kiosk as needed.
- Monitored ice in parking lot & spread stone for traction.
- Monitored Oak Openings Bluebird Trail.
- Mowed 2.16 acres.
- Planted 1,000 plugs.
- Porta-potty delivered & removed.
- Removal of fallen and & dead branches over trail.
- Replaced and repaired fencing as needed.
- Repaired sections of trail and rolled entire trail.
- Sealcoat asphalt apron.

- Sowed 467.49 lbs. of native seed.
- Five volunteer workdays were held at Oak Openings: 2/10, 4/13, 8/13, 10/13, & 12/14. Three volunteer days held at Donnelly Prairies and Oaks: 5/11, 6/8, & 7/13. Activities included applying herbicide, collecting seed, and removing invasive species.

Casey South/Liberty Prairie & Donnelley Oaks & Prairies

- Applied 289.75 gallons of herbicide to invasive species.
- Burned 1 brush pile.
- Cleared .69 acres.
- Collected 5.7 lbs. of native seed.
- Conducted a prescribed burn on 3.42 acres.
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments: April, June, August, October, & December.
- Installed signage as needed.
- Mowed 2.78 acres.
- Sowed 3 lbs. of native seed and 25 lbs. of cover crop.
- Delivered and removed porta-potty.
- Repaired sections of trail and rolled entire trail.
- Removal of fallen and & dead branches over trail.
- Two volunteer workdays were held at Liberty Prairie: 9/14 & 11/19. Three volunteer workdays were held at Donnelley Prairies and Oaks: 5/11, 6/8 & 7/13. Activities that included applying herbicide, collecting 3lbs. of seed, and removing invasive species.

Kildare

- Applied 231 gallons of herbicide to invasive species.
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachment: April, June, August, October, & December.
- Installed & reinstalled bench.
- Installed burn breaks.
- Installed doggie bag dispenser.
- Installed garbage can.
- Installed signage as needed.
- Monitored drainage.
- Mowed 16.8 acres.
- Mowed grass path.
- Planted 1 oak tree.
- Planted 500 plugs.
- Removed trash.
- Replaced property markers.
- Sowed 215.29 lbs. of native seed.

Lindholm Park

- Added additional rocks in parking lot area.
- Applied 72 gallons of herbicide to invasive species.
- Conducted ball field maintenance.
- Conducted playground equipment inspection.
- Conducted prescribed burn on .22 acres.

- Conducted property inspections & monitored encroachments: January, March, May, July, September, & November.
- Coordinated, managed, and awarded ballfield permits.
- Firebreaks installed
- Installed signage as needed.
- Monitor and maintain solar gate.
- Mow as needed.
- Planted 3 oak trees.
- Removed dead ash tree.
- Removed fallen and/or dead branches over trail.
- Repaired and replaced fencing as needed.
- Sealcoated parking lot and trail.

Milwaukee Road

- Applied 36 gallons of herbicide to invasive species and sidewalks.
- Conducted property inspections & monitored encroachments: February, April, June, July, August, October, November, & December.
- Installed firebreak as needed.
- Installed signage as needed.
- Monitored Edigi Lane drainage.
- Mowed 1.28 acres.
- Planted 8 lbs. of native planting material.

Old School

- Applied 6.55 gallons of herbicide to invasive species.
- Burned 15 brush piles
- Cleared 2.58 acres
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments: February, March, May, September, and November.
- Replaced property markers as needed.

River Road

- Applied 223.75 gallons of herbicide to invasive species.
- Burned 2 brush piles.
- Cleared .16 acres.
- Conducted maintenance and rolled trails as needed.
- Conducted prescribed burn on 3 acres.
- Conducted property inspections: April, June, August, October, and December.
- Installed burn break.
- Installed signage and property markers as needed.
- Mowed trail edges.
- Mowed .64 acres.
- Removal of fallen and/or dead branches over trail.
- Right-of-way tree removals.
- Sealcoat asphalt trailheads.
- Sowed 16 lbs. of native seed.

Rt. 45

- Applied 130 gallons of herbicide to invasive species.
- Burned 9 brush piles.
- Cleared 3.44 acres.
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments: January, April, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December.
- Installed firebreak as needed.
- Installed signage and property markers as needed.
- Mowed and widened foot paths.
- Removed garbage and debris.

Rt. 137

- Applied 41 gallons of herbicide to invasive species.
- Burned 6 brush piles.
- Conducted boardwalk inspection.
- Conducted a prescribed burn on 2.35 acres.
- Conducted maintenance and rolled trails as needed.
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments: April, June, September, October, and December.
- Continued clearing activities.
- Installed signage and property markers as needed.
- Maintenance and repairs to kiosk as needed.
- Mowed 1.25 acres.
- Removal of fallen and/or branches over trail.
- Removed garbage and debris.
- Sealcoated trails.

St. Mary's

- 739 gallons of herbicide applied to invasive species.
- Cleared 1.19 acres.
- Conducted prescribed burn on 30.43 acres.
- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments: January, March, May, July, & September.
- Installed fire break.
- Installed signage as needed.
- Mowed .78 acres.
- Removal of fallen and/or dead branches over trail.
- Repaired and replaced fencing as needed.
- Sealcoat asphalt trailheads.

Township Grounds

- Applied 4 gallons of herbicide to invasive species.
- Hauling & spreading mulch on landscape beds.
- Snow removal.

Winchester Rd/Libertyville Township Soccer Complex (LTSC)

- Conducted property inspections and monitored encroachments: January, February, March, April, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December.
- Removal of fallen tree.

- Installed signage as needed.
- Removed downed trees and buckthorn.

Seasonal Maintenance Activities

Winter:

- Clearing of buckthorn and other invasive trees.
- Burning of brush piles.
- Monthly volunteer workdays.
- Assist Road District in weather related events as needed.
- Open Space employees assist with the maintenance of Township grounds.
- Assist with food pantry activities as needed.

Spring:

- Herbiciding invasive plants.
- Planting native species.
- Trail maintenance and repairs.
- Burning is done on a rotating basis as site and weather conditions allow. Sites are prioritized and are burned in accordance with the prescribed burn management plan.
- Clean and inspect water control structures for wetlands. The water control structure is closed for the spring.
- Weekly activities: mowing, weed whacking, raking of baseball diamonds.
- Monthly volunteer workdays.
- Open Space employees assist with the maintenance of Township grounds.
- Assist Road District in weather related events as needed.
- Assist with food pantry activities as needed.

Summer:

- Grading of dirt along trail edges.
- Herbiciding invasive plants.
- Trail maintenance and repairs.
- Weekly activities: mowing, weed whacking, raking of baseball diamonds.
- Monthly volunteer workdays.
- Open Space employees assist with the maintenance of Township grounds.
- Assist with food pantry activities as needed.

Fall:

- Seed collection.
- Planting native species.
- Herbiciding invasive plants.
- Trail maintenance and repairs.
- Clean and inspect water control structures for wetlands – open for fall.
- Burning is done on a rotating basis as site and weather conditions allow. Sites are prioritized and are burned in accordance with the prescribed burn management plan.
- Weekly activities: mowing, weed whacking, raking of baseball diamonds.
- Monthly volunteer workdays.
- Open Space employees assist with the maintenance of Township grounds.
- Assist with food pantry activities as needed.

Public Communication and Outreach

K. O'Connor served on the ComEd Green Region Advisory Grant Committee.

K. O'Connor attended Annual Libertyville Township Soccer Complex Meeting – January 30, 2024

K. O'Connor & J. Happ met with representatives from the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission - February 7, 2024

J. Happ attended the North Branch Watershed Workgroup General Meeting – February 15 and August 14, 2024

K. O'Connor attended The Farm Foundation's Grand Opening Ceremony – September 27, 2024

J. Happ attended the Des Plaines River Watershed Workgroup Meetings – August 15, 2024

J. Happ & K. O'Connor met on site with representatives from USACE and USEPA regarding the Donnelley Prairies and Oaks Wetland Mitigation Bank – September 23, 2024

K. O'Connor met with Representative Laura Faver Dias over traffic safety concerns on Casey and Almond Roads – November 25, 2024

Professional Development

J. Happ, M. Cardenas, B. Renz, and K. Slaybaugh successfully completed the Forest Management for Game Species Training – January 22, 2024

M. Cardenas successfully obtained his Prescribed Burn Manager Certificate – April 11, 2024

K. Slaybaugh successfully obtained his Commercial Driver's License - May 3, 2024

J. Happ, A. Cabanas, M. Cardenas, B. Renz, and K. Slaybaugh successfully completed the IAA Chainsaw Training – May 23, 2024

B. Renz & K. Slaybaugh successfully completed S130/190 Fire Training – November 2, 2024

J. Happ & M. Cardenas successfully passed the Illinois Department of Agriculture's Herbicide Renewal Online Exam – December 13, 2024