

Iowa Ornithologists Union Grant - 2014

Project Name-

E. B. Lyons Center Addition Development

Project description

The site consisted of a 52 acre area that was purchased in 2011 by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation with assistance from the City of Dubuque, Friends of the Mines of Spain and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. A master plan was created in 2012 for the 52 acres. The site consisted of approximately 25 acres of former cropland and 27 acres in forest. The project consisted of planting all cropland to native tall grass and short grass prairies.

Project goals-

Reconstruct Native Prairie: 40 acres of former cropland has been planted into Tall Grass and Short Grass Prairie. Funding to purchase seed was provided thru Iowa Ornithologist Union, City of Dubuque , Friends of Mines of Spain and Iowa DNR. Funding was provided by the Iowa DNR for elimination nonnative plants and the Iowa DOT provided the equipment to plant.

By planting the two prairies, visitors can compare the two habitats and explore the different vegetation. The area is utilized for wildlife habitat particularly for bird species that utilize grassland for nesting, cover and food source. The species include the Dickcissel, Henslow's Sparrow, Bobolink, Meadowlark and Pheasant. As the prairie grows and matures, these species should begin to utilize the prairie for food and nesting. Pheasants have been seen on site and one male Bobolink was sited early last spring.

Encourage and Provide Interpretation and Educational Programs: The site will be utilized for interpretive programming. Park staff will lead groups, classes and organizations on a tour of the area to learn about the prairies and wildlife. Visitors to the area will be encouraged to explore the area on their own. Only a limited number of programs have been taken to the site due to construction of a trail and shelter/latrine.

Control runoff and soil erosion: As the prairie matures and it's root structure increases control of runoff will be controlled throughout the area. Since the prairie was just planted, this process will become more evident next summer and fall. A water retention basin has also been constructed for heavier runoff and has been planted to tall grass prairie.

Project impact –

The prairie project is part of an overall master plan for a 52 acre area and was developed to fit in with the Mines of Spain Master Plan. As part of planting project informational signs and information will be available for visitors to use while out in the area. The prairie reconstruction provides a place close to the EB Lyons Interpretive Center for people to walk thru and while there observe birds and other wildlife. The area consists of prairie and forest providing habitat for wildlife, especially birds. The main wildlife that the visitor will observe will be birds and butterflies during certain times of the year. Although the prairie is in its infancy, visitors have provided input on the project and how it will provided a great place to visit and observe nature