

FNA News Jan/Feb 2012



Website: www.fermilabnaturalareas.org

Blog: fermilabnaturalareas.blogspot.com

Contact us at fermilabnaturalareas@gmail.com or 630-840-4845

Fermilab Natural Areas (FNA), is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit tax-exempt corporation formed in 2006:

- * to study and restore Fermilab's unique combination of ecological communities
- * to inform and enrich local residents' knowledge of Fermilab (FNAL), and
- * to contribute to the preservation of global biodiversity.

Find us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Fermilab-Natural-Areas/207827679253186>

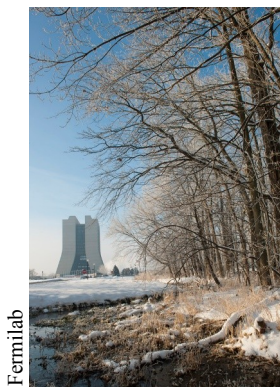
A Message from FNA President Rod Walton fermilabnaturalareas@gmail.com or 630-840-2565

Happy New Year to all our friends! In this first newsletter of the new year, it's appropriate to reflect on where we've been for the last year. It has been a successful year of growth for FNA, due to the generosity of donors and volunteers, as well as hard work "behind the scenes" to improve our organization. We've been fortunate to get funding help from grants and donations to support the work by our volunteers. And speaking of volunteers, during the year our volunteers have logged over 3000 hours of service on the Fermilab site! Thanks to everyone for this gratifying support. There is still much to be done, and now is time to look to the future. Our annual general membership meeting will be February 16th, at 7:00 pm, [here in Wilson Hall](#) at [Fermilab](#). This is an opportunity for us to get together with other FNA members and friends, celebrate the past and plan for the future. It is also an opportunity to play a larger role in FNA through board membership. If you might be interested in running for a board seat, please send us [an email](#) or leave a message at 630-840-4845. I hope to see you in room One West of the "High-Rise" on Thursday Feb. 16th!

FNA Calendar of Events

- Jan 5** Fermilab [ELM Committee](#) meeting, Wilson Hall, One East, noon.
- Jan 9** Weekly Brush Cutters work day, 1 pm to 3 pm. Meet in the [Lederman Science Center](#) parking lot. (The next brush cutters' day is Jan 23.)
- Jan 16** No Brush Cutters work day today. Lab is closed for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- Jan 19** FNA Board of Directors meeting, Wilson Hall, Snake Pit, 7 pm.
- Jan 21** [Habitat restoration work day](#). 9 am to noon. Meet in the [Lederman Science Center](#) parking lot. Please check http://www.fnal.gov/pub/about/campus/ecology/prairie/habitat_restoration.html for contact info.
- Jan 23** Weekly Brush Cutters work day resumes, 1 pm to 3 pm. Meet in the [Lederman Science Center](#) parking lot. Continuing every Monday, until further notice.
- Feb 2** Fermilab [ELM Committee](#) meeting, Wilson Hall, One East, noon.
- Feb 16** **FNA Annual Meeting**, Fermilab's Wilson Hall, room One West, 7 pm. All are welcome!
- Feb 18** [Habitat restoration work day](#). 9 am to noon. Meet in the [Lederman Science Center](#) parking lot. Please check http://www.fnal.gov/pub/about/campus/ecology/prairie/habitat_restoration.html for contact info.
- Mar 1** Fermilab [ELM Committee](#) meeting, Wilson Hall, One East, noon.
- Mar 17** [Habitat restoration work day](#). 9 am to noon.

Please watch your email, [FNA Blog](#), or [Facebook](#) for last-minute changes or additional events.



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DuPage Grant to FNA Kick-starts New Restoration Effort Brad Hooker, Fermilab

Reprinted with permission from [Fermilab Today](#)

Fermilab Natural Areas (FNA) was awarded a \$7,500 grant from [The DuPage Community Foundation](#) on Dec. 7. The grant will go toward the ongoing restoration of habitat within the Main Ring, with a particular focus on restoring the woodland savanna. FNA hopes to remove the weedier trees, shrubs and invasive species that occupy nearly two-thirds of the 35-acre savanna. This will help restore the area to a diverse savanna ecosystem. Work will begin this winter.

Though many Fermilab employees and others volunteer with FNA, the nonprofit group is fiscally and organizationally separate from the laboratory. As FNA field project manager Ryan Campbell explained, Fermilab recognizes the value of natural spaces and wants to encourage the group. "FNA is overall pretty excited about the grant," he said. "We've been trying to get this funded for a while." Ryan added, "We are hoping to find in-kind or matching funds to double or triple the effectiveness for the restoration of this beautiful oak savanna. In the future, FNA will be looking for volunteers who would like to become stewards of the savanna."

FNA president Rod Walton emphasized the value of the area as a community asset: "We want to use this as an opportunity to get volunteers involved and give not only employees but people in the region a sense of ownership of the natural areas."

The DuPage Community Foundation also gave [30 grants to other local nonprofit organizations](#) within the areas of arts, culture, education, environment, health and human services. Established in 1986, The DuPage Community Foundation is a publicly-supported 501 (c)(3) organization to which contributions are tax deductible. It was created to benefit the people of DuPage County and receives contributions and bequests into a permanent endowment from individuals, corporations, organizations and foundations wishing to make lasting contributions to the people of DuPage.



This photo, supplied by The DuPage Community Foundation, shows Rod Walton (left) and Ryan Campbell (middle) of FNA receiving the grant from Frank Hudetz (right), a trustee at The DuPage Community Foundation.

Corona Tools Partners With Fermilab Natural Areas To Help Get Rid of Illinois Invasive Plants

by [Shawna Coronado](#), FNA Board. Reprinted from Shawna's blog: <http://thecasualgardener.blogspot.com/>

[Fermilab Natural Areas](#) (FNA) is a not-for-profit organization concerned about the 6,800 acre Fermilab campus in the western suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. The property is an astounding natural garden filled with lakes, woodlands, native oak savannah prairie, a marsh, and much more. FNA is working to maintain and help preserve the natural areas on the campus.

In an on-going effort to fight invasive plants, FNA has begun a weekly Fall/Winter clean-up program to remove invasive plants, shrubs, and trees while teaching volunteers the significance of native plants in the winter landscape.

As part of the initiative, pruning and cutting tools were needed. [Corona Tools](#) supplied nine saws, six loppers, and three large pruning



saws for the team, and it was an enormous help. At the first volunteer day, Nov. 7, we removed invasive honeysuckle from the woodland. You could see the plants quite clearly as they were the only ones with bright green leaves remaining in the fall.

Corona Tools has been helping groups all over the country make a difference for our environment with the [Corona Cares Program](#). Thanks, Corona Tools, for making a difference for the native plant prairie here in Illinois. Good job – it is appreciated!

If you would like to volunteer to help [Fermilab Natural Areas](#), the team could REALLY use your help and it is easy to join. No prior experience is required to participate. Volunteers should wear sturdy boots, and dress for the weather. In case of bad weather, the team will process & mix native seeds from the property indoors, so please come anyway. Check the FNA calendar of events on page one. Email Ryan Campbell ryancamp@fnal.gov with any questions.



Mechanized Prairie Seed Harvesting at Fermilab *Mike Becker, Fermilab*



Although most FNA members have heard of, or participated in, hand harvesting efforts at Fermilab, many may not know of the mechanical side of harvesting. From the [early days of the prairie restoration](#) efforts in the 1970's, mechanical harvesting has been critical to the Lab's prairie restoration efforts. The late [Dr. Robert Betz](#), who started Fermilab's [prairie restoration effort](#), brought the idea of using the equipment that destroyed the prairie, to restore the prairie. At that time, several members of the Roads and Grounds Group had farming backgrounds. Dr. Betz worked with this group to modify and use plows, disks, seed driers, seed drills [*photo, left*] and combines to jump start efforts to restore

large areas of prairie. Mechanical seed harvesting, tweaked and improved over the years, is still an active part of the program. The photos show some of the farm equipment that has been used to restore prairie over the past 35 years. The mechanical combine [*shown, right*] now used each fall, collects several thousand pounds of tallgrass seed. This mechanically harvested seed, as well as hand harvested seed, is used to enrich many other areas of the site. Some of this seed is traded to other restoration organizations in the area that are starting or improving large tracts of prairie. Many organizations in DuPage, Kane, Kendall, and Will counties have restored prairies using seed that came from Fermilab.



A Closer Look at Seed Sharing *Mike Becker, Ryan Campbell, Martin Valenzuela, Fermilab*

Fermilab has received valuable native seed of many species from regional Forest Preserve Districts and other partners. In exchange, the Forest Preserve Districts receive bulk tallgrass seed harvested mechanically with Fermilab's combine. These cooperative seed exchange arrangements promote regional native biodiversity throughout the Chicago region and have steadily increased plant diversity in Fermilab's natural areas. The Districts that usually participate are: Kane County, Kendall County, Will County and DuPage County. We also have traded other species with Morton Arboretum, Nachusa Grasslands, [Garfield Farm](#), and St. Charles Park District. Seed exchange allows us to introduce three to seven new species to various ecotypes on our site every year. Some of the hard to find species that Fermilab has received are marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*), yellow star grass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*) and porcupine grass (*Stipa spartia*). Other seed has been prairie violet, prairie gentian, wild cucumber, and shrubs such as button bush, ninebark, and wahoo. Amounts collected usually range between tens of grams to a few pounds of seed. A highlight of a previous season was when staff and Fermilab Natural Areas volunteers collected 13.5 pounds of white and purple prairie clovers (*Dalea candida* and *purpurea*) from a regional partner site, to be planted in the Fermilab prairies!

Dave Margolis, Natural Resource Manager of the [Oswegoland Park District](#) gives us a partner's perspective:

"We have over 500 acres of natural areas approximately within the park district. The first time I received seed from Fermilab was in the winter of 2004-05. We did not have as much land as we do now. I spread the bulk of it along the Wau-bonsie Creek watershed, in a stretch of decades-old degraded riparian areas several miles long. I spread it after my first burns as burn boss with the Oswegoland Park District. At that time this area was nearly 100% invasive plants such as Canada thistle, reed canary grass, barnyard grasses, honeysuckle, buckthorn, teasel, ragweed, & willow. The district had done perhaps one burn, ever. Since that time we have done yearly supplemental seeding and planting. The site has turned around and is now in a good recovery stage. I would say that those first donated bags of seed made a significant difference because native plants began to grow the following year."

The park district also involves local elementary schools. Dave shares an example of our seed's reach: "This year's Fermilab seed will go to: [Traugber Jr. High](#) (6 acres), Homestead Elementary (1/8th acre), Fox Chase Elementary (1.5 acres), Prairie Point Elementary (2 acres), Opportunity K-12 School (1 acre) and Brokaw Early Learning Center (1/18th acre). All of the schools incorporate their prairie habitats into the curriculum. Traugber hosts a science blitz where local schools without schoolyard habitats come to Traugber to use their prairies (a wet prairie and tallgrass prairie). I've actually done programs at these school prairies. Traugber is really ahead of the curve with the sustainable schoolyard vision."



Bridging a Gap - an Eagle Scout Leadership Project *Rod Walton, Fermilab*

One of the great strengths of Fermilab (FNAL) is its availability to the general public for a variety of activities. We are justifiably proud of Fermilab as an open facility where our neighbors, as well as employees, can come to admire the architecture, be entertained, enjoy a gourmet dinner, or experience the outdoors. The “Big Woods” north of Wilson Hall is an often used area for hiking & bird watching, and cross-country skiing. The main trail crosses a small stream at two spots, but over the years, the foot bridges had deteriorated somewhat, threatening to create an unsafe condition.

A local Boy Scout came to the rescue as part of his Eagle Scout [public service project](#). Nick Wielgos from Troop 7 in Elburn, son of employee Randy Wielgos, proposed to repair these bridges as part of his work towards obtaining Eagle rank. Service projects take many hours of planning, and require the Eagle-candidate Scout to demonstrate their leadership by coordinating materials, volunteers, and experts necessary to complete the project. Working with the FNAL Roads & Grounds, and Engineering Departments, Nick designed a project to repair the bridges and improve creek flow at those locations. He organized materials, equipment, and twenty-four volunteers who worked over 230 total hours to complete the job this past November. The improved bridges will enable our visitors to walk or cross country ski through the woods and enjoy the environment more safely. This feature reinforces the many positive benefits that accompany simply getting out and appreciating nature. The fact that we exist in the midst of a heavily developed area only further reinforces our role as good neighbor to our community.

Photos supplied by Nick Wielgos show a washed out bridge approach, his volunteer work crew, and a finished ramp.



For Sale by FNA **Shop on-line at <http://www.fermilabnaturalareas.org/shop.html>**

It's not too early to think about rain barrels! Our recycled food-grade plastic barrels have an overflow connection on top, a spigot with hose bib on the bottom, and metal mesh in the removable lid. Members pay \$80, non-members \$90. Proceeds help FNA's efforts. Call 630-840-4845, email fermilabnaturalareas@gmail.com or visit our online store.

Membership/Donations

<http://www.fermilabnaturalareas.org/membership.html> by U.S. Mail or online via PayPal

Help us enhance Fermilab's ecology. Members receive the FNA Newsletter via email, are invited to special events, and get a discount on rain barrel purchases. FNA is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organization.

All donations to FNA are tax deductible, and can be made in memory or honor of a friend or loved one.

Fermilab employees can donate online via the [Employee Self Service website](#).

Benefactor	\$2,500 and up	Sponsor	\$100
Patron	\$1,000	Contributor	\$50
Supporter	\$500	Member	\$25
Donor	\$250	Student/Youth	\$15

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Please mail your check or money order to: Fermilab Natural Areas
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