



# Dayton Bluffs Preserve Five-Year Report

The Conservation Foundation, Friends of Dayton Bluffs & City of Ottawa  
2013-2018

It's been a great five years of work at the Dayton Bluffs Preserve in Ottawa! An amazing amount of work was completed on restoration of the woodlands and former farm fields, and general clean-up and public awareness of the property. **The volunteers with the Friends of Dayton Bluffs have been amazing!** And, a few nice amenities were also added so people can now access and enjoy the preserve.



## Here are some major highlights from the beginning:

- 2013: Purchase of the property for approx. \$2 million, July 2013
- 2014: Started woodland brush clearing and prairie restoration activities  
Started volunteer work days and public tours/open houses  
Held FairmountSantröl restoration work day with more than 500 employees  
Successfully obtained challenge grant, raising more than \$31,000 total for restoration
- 2015: Cleaned up Native American burial mounds area  
Formally established Friends of Dayton Bluffs volunteer group  
Trained volunteers in pesticide and chainsaw safety, and prescribed burns
- 2016: Started ravine restoration and erosion control  
Phase 1 restoration nearly completed with initial removal of invasive woody species  
Conducted first prairie burns and collected several pounds of prairie seeds
- 2017: Held grand opening in May with more than 150 in attendance  
Completed site master concept plan and added new prairie and woodland trails  
Added new entrance sign along Rt. 71 with help of volunteers  
Started Mighty Acorns youth education program with local schools
- 2018: Added additional storage container for volunteers and their equipment  
"Check dams" made from site black locust added to ravines to help slow erosion  
Planted 192 donated cardinal flowers and 20 donated paw paw trees  
Trail markers added made from site black locust burned with trail symbol templates  
Held first 5k community trail run/walk  
Thinned small understory trees from bluff slopes and throughout woodlands



## Five-Year Major Site Accomplishments

- Cleared invasive species from 154 acres of woodlands; planted 99 acres to prairie.
- Majority of invasive plant-infested areas have been cut and treated.
- Cleared nearly 5 miles of woodland edge to open it up.
- Removed 2 tons of trash from ravines.
- Added the following amenities: 6 picnic tables, a tool shed and storage container, trails, small foot bridges, entrance road, sign and parking area, utility vehicle.
- Restored the pioneer cemetery; 75 graves located, headstone restoration nearly complete.



## Volunteers and Public Support

- **Friends of the Dayton Bluffs** formally established to help with restoration and other cleanup activities tallying more than 15,000 hours.
- Fairmount Santrol volunteer work day in 2014 produced 2,000 hours of volunteer work valued at \$27,000
- Approx. \$25,000 of additional in-kind services provided by area companies and professionals.



## Funding

- Initial acquisition funding provided by Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, Grand Victoria Foundation and the Hamill Family Foundation- approx. \$2 million
- Approx. \$200,000 has been raised additionally for restoration and clean up activity. Special thanks to US Fish & Wildlife Service, NRCS Dept. of Ag., and Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation.

## A Big Thank You to our Friends and Partners!

- Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation
- Grand Victoria Foundation
- Hamill Family Foundation
- US Fish & Wildlife Service/NRCS Dept. of Ag
- City of Ottawa, especially Mayor Bob Eschbach and councilmen Dan Aussem and James Less
- Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, IDNR
- The Pizzo Companies
- Christopher B. Burke Engineering
- Bedrock Earthscapes
- Operating Engineers Local 150
- Illinois Valley Contractors Association
- Ruiz Construction
- Etscheid, Duttlinger & Associates, Inc.
- Grand Rapids Excavating
- Universal Paving & Excavating
- D Construction
- FairmountSantrol/Wedron Silica
- Jerry Halterman, Dan Reynolds/HR Imaging
- Tom Heimsoth and Heritage Harbor
- Ottawa Visitors Center
- LaSalle County Master Naturalists
- Marcia Nelson, great neighbor and friend
- *Starved Rock Country* magazine
- V3 Environmental Consultants
- Tangled Roots Brewing Company/Lone Buffalo
- Bill and Susie Walsh
- Midwest SOAR
- Nancy Maze and Family
- Al Kammerer and his portable band-saw
- Steven Anderson/Miller Twp. Construction
- Gary Boe
- Our wonderful volunteers and individual donors



*Controlled woodland burn.*



*Volunteers at a Saturday work day.*