

Elkhorn Area High School Science Classes return to Petersen Island Woods Preserve

On April 25, thirty-three students, three teachers and eleven volunteers returned to Petersen Island Woods Preserve for the 8th annual Day in the Woods event, organized by Kettle Moraine Land Trust, Lauderdale Lakes Improvement Association and sponsored by The Elkhorn Fund.

The weather forecast included thunderstorms, which held off until later in the afternoon, so we had a nice sunny and warm day to continue restoration efforts in the Preserve.

As in past years, the



students and their teachers were divided into four groups that rotate through four conservation learning tasks during the event. The experienced volunteers then train these groups in each task including safety, since power equipment, logs and steep hills are present throughout the task areas. Herb Sharpless, KMLT Stewardship Chair, welcomed the group, gave an overview of the activities planned and discussed some safety considerations.



Task 1 -
Water
Quality
with the
LLIA
process
explained
by Dave



DeAngelis, KMLT President, and executed from Jerry Petersen's pontoon boat to demonstrate sample collection on Middle Lake. Dave, Jerry and Floyd Pochowski led this event with Jerry taking photos. Dave introduced the LLIA process, captured in a handout created by Bud Vance. Since it was a nice sunny day, this was the favorite task as noted by this student!

Task 2 - Apply fresh chips to more steeply sloped portions of the Three Kettle Ridge Trail from the pile located at the Oak Park trail entrance (chips from dead Ash tree removal last December). Primary locations were selected to minimize erosion on the steep slopes located near and above the bench area, the Oak Park Road trail entrance, and then the trail section located on the hill above the burn pit area. Melissa Hunter, KMLT Program Assistant, and Sue Heffron, KMLT Outreach Chair, led this event with Sue taking photos. Large plastic bags were shoveled partly full of chips for carrying to trail areas needing renewed chip coverage. Melissa was stationed at the trail locations where bags of chips were dumped after the volunteers carried them over their shoulder to that location. Melissa then raked them into a nice, uniform path and students traveling the trail packed the chips.

were dumped after the volunteers carried them over their shoulder to that location. Melissa then raked them into a nice, uniform path and students traveling the trail packed the chips.

Task 3 - Emerald Ash Borer and Oak Wilt recovery by planting new White and Burr Oak trees in the preserve and hauling fish crib logs cut from dead Ash trees from trail areas to trail entrances. This task shared information about how disease has reshaped the woods. A cart was used for hauling fish crib logs along the trail. Herb, Debbie Ferrari, and Maggie



Zoellner, KMLT Executive Director, led this event with

Debbie taking photos. Debbie developed the fish crib log hauling process at



the last IWP event, so she managed loading and movement with support from Herb.



Maggie led the planting of young trees and

protecting them from deer browse in four open areas created by the loss of Red Oak to Oak Wilt disease and Ash killed by Emerald Ash Borer.

The students also enjoyed removing old Buckthorn stumps!



Task 4 - Continue to clear brush and down trees from the meadow area of the trail and stack cut brush into burn piles. Ginny Colburn, Paul Mozina, and Rev. Gerry Petersen supported this event with photos taken by Melissa and Sue. Ginny taught each crew how to apply concentrated Roundup used to kill cut tree stumps and she managed the cut brush stacking to make the best use of the burn pit. Paul and Gerry focused on cutting brush and fallen trees, with students hauling the brush to the burn pit. Ginny talked about the Sedge Meadow and how clearing the Buckthorn has helped restore the native understory. There was Oak tree planting in the meadow area, since the Ash trees have died and continued to increase the sun reaching the ground in this area. Several fish crib logs were generated during the brush cutting.



Deanna





Brunlinger, National Board Certified Teacher, Department Chair summed up the event by saying "Thanks again for an outstanding day!"

