

Harrison-Benwell Conservation Area

Harrison-Benwell Woodland Restoration

EXAMPLE PROJECT :



Harrison-Benwell Woodland Restoration Project

Who: McHenry County Conservation District, Natural Resource Management Department

What: A habitat improvement project on 40 acres of land owned by the District near Wonder Lake at the Harrison-Benwell Conservation Area.

When: Work began with brush removal on July 30, 2010 and will continue through several stages through March, 2011.

Where: Located along the south side of McCollum Lake Road, east of East Wonder Lake Road.

Why: To restore high quality oak woodlands systems, remove exotic and invasive plants, enhance woodland bird breeding habitat, and improve stream quality in Wonder Lake by reducing erosion and create a more scenic vista across the preserve.

Coming Soon

- Ancient Oak Groves
- Open Vistas
- Spring Wildflowers
- Improved Wildlife Habitats
- Increased Flood Storage Capacity

Harrison Benwell Conservation Area is among the first parcels of land acquired by the McHenry County Conservation District after its formation in 1971. This 80 acre site was selected for its large mature oaks, beautiful headwater stream feeding Wonder Lake, diverse displays of spring wildflowers and close proximity to Harrison School.

Thirty five years later this once beautiful woodland has become overgrown with invasive woody plants and weeds from other continents such as European Buckthorn, Asian honeysuckle and garlic mustard. These species have no natural controls on their populations and can destroy native wildflowers while inhibiting the reproduction of sun loving trees such as oaks. Left unchecked these invasive species can obliterate native woodland communities over time.

Look for a much healthier Harrison Benwell Woods in the months to come. At first glance, the brush and tree removal may seem destructive, but allowing sunlight and water to flow freely through the ecosystem once more will create positive and noticeable changes over the next several years.

Harrison - Benwell

Project Schedule

July 30, 2010 Brush removal of invasive species such as box elder, European buckthorn and Asian honeysuckle.

Spring, 2011 Re-seeding of native woodland wildflowers and grasses.

For more information contact : McHenry County Conservation District
MCCDistrict.org 815-338-6223