

**Bald Eagle Otter Lake Regional Park - Benson Farm Prairie Restoration
State Wildlife Grant Final Report
22 December 2005**

Submitted by:

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2015 North Van Dyke St.
Maplewood, MN 55109

Site Prep and Planting

The Benson Farm prairie was planted as of 21 June 2005. Prairie Restorations Inc. was contracted to do the final site prep and seeding. The site prep included fall 2004 herbicide treatment and prescribed burn. This was followed up by disking of the site in the fall of 2004 and spring of 2005. The site received a second herbicide treatment in May 2005. The seeding of the site was done in two stages. The forb seeds were broadcast using a Viacon spreader. The grass seeds were planted with a Truax seed drill with a harrow attachment. The seed list is attached. The prairie was mowed in mid-August.

Initial Tree and shrub removal was done in May 2004 by Bluemel Tree Service and reported in June progress report. Additional tree work was done this summer and fall to control black locust and buckthorn. An existing pine plantation was thinned and had lower branches removed to allow for controlled burns. The wooded wetlands within the project area were thinned to allow for better grass growth and controlled burns.

Ramsey County Parks staff did additional work on improving the fire breaks (attachment 1) and repairing the boundary fence.

The need for future mowing will be assessed in the spring of 2006. Ramsey County Parks will conduct a prescribed burn in 2006 if adequate grass is present.

Bird survey points were established and breeding bird surveys will begin in the spring of 2006.

Initial establishment of native grasses and forbs appears good. During site visits in October and November, little bluestem and sideoats gramma was already seeding in some spots. Black-eyed Susan seedling were found throughout the site. Noxious weeds appear to be minimal. The status of weeds will be reviewed in the spring of 2006 and treated if needed.

Funding Sources

Metro Greenways Contract A57631	\$27,500.00	
State Wildlife Grant Contract A59058	40,000.00	
Metropolitan Council Contract SG-04-033	17,959.52	
		\$85459.52

Expenditures

Tree and Brush removal		
Bluemel Tree Service	\$32,407.95	
Natural Resources Restoration Inc	16,716.83	
Prairie Prep and Seeding		
Prairie Restoration Inc	35,740.00	
Misc.		
Fred C. Anderson – Signs	383.46	
Menards – supplies	113.15	
R.C. Community Corrections – supplies	94.75	
		\$85459.52

Ramsey County In-kind - Staff

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Total</u>
John Moriarty	80	26.90	2152.00
Ralph Sawyer	19	22.78	432.82
Gary Koesling	19	20.30	385.70
Eric Jones	5	19.30	96.50
Total			3067.02

In-kind for County Equipment not charged to project

State Wildlife Grant = \$40,000.00
Total Match = \$47,470.80

SEED ALLOCATION LIST

Ramsey County Parks - Bald Eagle Park
Invoice No. 94545
April 19, 2005

GRASSES, SEDGES & BULRUSHES

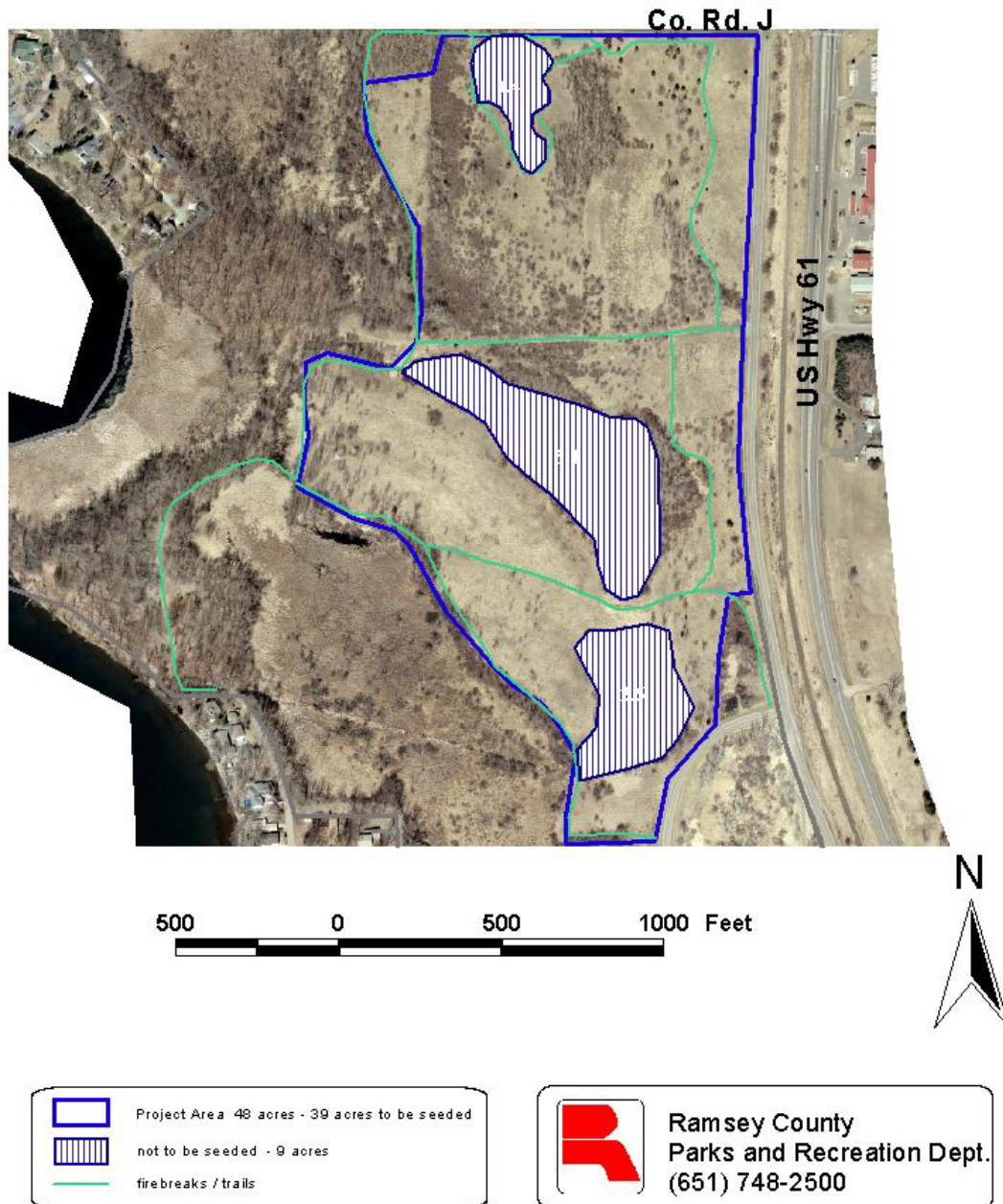
<u>COMMON NAME</u>	<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Side oats grama	Bouteloua curtipendula	110 lbs.
Canada wild rye	Elymus canadensis	13 lbs.
Little bluestem	Schizachyrium scoparium	172 lbs.
Indian grass	Sorghastrum nutans	16 lbs.
Prairie dropseed	Sporobolus heterolepis	3.25 lbs.

WILDFLOWERS

Yarrow	Achillea millefolium	28 oz.
Leadplant	Amorpha canescens	47 oz.
Thimbleweed	Anemone cylindrica	47 oz.
Butterfly weed	Asclepias tuberosa	47 oz.
Smooth aster	Aster laevis	94 oz.
Azure aster	Aster oolentangiensis	47 oz.
Bush clover	Lespedeza capitata	47 oz.
Dotted blazing star	Liatris punctata	47 oz.
Wilde lupine	Lupinus perennis	47 oz.
Wild bergamot	Monarda fistulosa	65.5 oz.
Purple prairie clover	Petalostemum purpureum	140 oz.
Black-eyed Susan	Rudbeckia hirta	94 oz.
Gray goldenrod	Solidago nemoralis	47 oz.
Stiff goldenrod	Solidago rigida	47 oz.
Hoary vervain	Verbena stricta	47 oz.
Golden alexander	Zizia aurea	47 oz.



Bald Eagle Regional Park Benson Farm Prairie Restoration





Initial clearing of the firebreaks for Benson Farm Prairie Restoration – March 2004



Center of Benson Farm Prairie Restoration looking north – March 2005



Disking Benson Farm Prairie Restoration – April 2005



Applying second herbicide treatment at Benson Farm Prairie Restoration – May 2005



Drilling prairie grass seed at Benson Farm Prairie Restoration – June 2005



Broadcasting prairie forb seed at Benson Farm Prairie Restoration – June 2005



Benson Farm Prairie Restoration first growing season – late July 2005



Benson Farm Prairie Restoration – thinned pine stand and burn pile – December 2005

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DEADLINES

ADVERTISING

Public Notices.....Thursday at 5 p.m.

Display

• Proof Wednesday at 5 p.m.

• Final Friday at noon

• Classified Thursday at 5 p.m.

• Line ads.....Monday at 11:30 a.m.

EDITORIAL

Calendar.....Tuesday at noon

Releases.....Friday at noon

Letters.....Friday at noon

Obituaries.....Monday at 9 a.m.

DELIVERY DATE

Wednesday

CONTACT US AT:

Phone 651-407-1200

County preserves little prairie near your house

Ramsey County presents restoration of green space to natural state

by Hannah Lewis

Staff Writer

Bobolinks, meadow larks, grasshopper sparrows, sedge wrens and monarchs won't make their home just anywhere. The singing and brightly fluttering species like a good healthy swath of prairie, according to John Moriarty.

The Ramsey County natural resources specialist will discuss a prairie restoration project this week that's been proposed for the Benson

Farm site of Bald Eagle Otter Lakes Regional Park.

In addition to providing habitat for a diverse array of song birds and insects, Moriarty said, the restoration of a 40-to-45-acre prairie could improve the runway for pilots at the Benson Airport across the street.

The site is currently dominated by mowed walking paths. The site is currently an "old field" dominated by broome grass and about 10 acres of volunteer cottonwood and dogwood.

"People that have come to appreciate nature do appreciate the more natural habitat. When they go out for a walk, it's not just to get in their miles," he said.

When the prairie is finished in about five years, it will flourish with diverse native wild flowers and grasses up to 5 feet tall, a few oak trees and mowed walking paths.

Ramsey County and the Department of Natural Resources will present the hows and whys of prairie restoration at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 18, at the Tamarack Nature Center, located at 5287 Otter Lake Road in White Bear Township. For more information, call the nature center at 651-407-5350.

trees, he said. Deer and other wildlife populate the area and will probably remain through the transition.

The project will add to a system of prairie patches around Rice Creek and Battle Creek parks. Tamarack Nature Center is located at the National Guard in Arden Hills. Moriarty said, "It's a hard back to pre-settlement times when the area was made up of woodlands, oak Savannahs and grass prairie."

Beyond aesthetics, the naturalist emphasized the value of prairies in their ability to withstand drought and other disasters. Roots go deeper and holding water and nutrients, and diversity stabilizes the ecosystem. For example, he explained, if one type of wildflower becomes scarce, the insects dependent on it will have an array of other species to support them in a diverse system. That stabilizes the food chain.

Part of an adult education series on natural resource management, this session was prompted by concerns among neighbors that tax delinquents shouldn't fund prairie restoration. Moriarty said a Department of Natural Resources grant that can pay for only prairie restoration will fund the project. Moriarty and a DNR naturalist will discuss how the prairie is to be built, and how home-owners can convert their own gardens and lawns into prairie land. Moriarty said it's a good way to control dandelions.

Hannah Lewis can be reached at 651-407-1228 or hplewis@sherbel.net.

CURIOUS VISITORS



Curious George and a pirate friend (PTA members Shannon Meath and Shannon DeVinny) mingle with visitors at the Hugo Elementary School book fair and PTA sponsored spaghetti dinner Friday, March 12. The book fair raised a total of \$3,500 for books to be used in classrooms at the school.

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