History of the Delaware Native Plant Society (DNPS) Restoration Project of the Native Plant Demonstration Garden at the University of DE, College of Earth, Ocean, & Environment Hugh R. Sharp Campus, Lewes, DE

Over the years, many people have contributed to this project, and many hours have been spent in the creation of this great little garden. This report is a summary of all efforts up to December 2019.

Historical Achievements

Historical information about this site can be found online at:
http://www.ceoe.udel.edu/nativeplantgarden/index.html

Present Day Involvement

On **28 October 2017** we embarked on a long-term project to renovate and rehabilitate the native plant demonstration garden on the north side of the Cannon Marine Studies Library/Laboratory at the University of Delaware College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment Hugh R. Sharp Campus in Lewes located off 700 Pilottown Rd (on College Dr). Working in cooperation with the campus maintenance crew, this day became an important clean up day which laid the ground work for more significant improvements later on. We began by pulling out a lot of non-native plants, pulling out some trash and debris, and cutting back overgrown branches on some of the trees over the entire site.

Two workdays on **12 May 2018** and **3 November 2018** were focused on adding new plants into the southern portion of the site adjacent to the building. We planted close to 500 individual plants of 13 native species, some of which were donated by our good friend and DNPS member Bob Meadows out of his private nursery. The weather cooperated beautifully with our plantings, and a high percentage of them lived. Here's a sampling of what was added.

– *Asclepias incarnata* (marsh milkweed)
– *Eupatorium* (*Eutrochium*) *fistulosum* (hollow-stem Joe-pye-weed)
– *Lobelia cardinalis* (cardinal flower)
– *Verbena hastata* (blue vervain)
– *Iris versicolor* (blueflag iris)
– *Opuntia humifusa* (Eastern prickly-pear cactus)
– *Yucca filamentosa* (yucca)

The **13th of July 2019** saw our fourth volunteer workday in which we pulled out more non-native plants, and did a general cleanup of the entire area. We also began to plan for the renovation of the northern half of the site, and over the next few months we discussed turning this section into a pollinator garden. At 3,973 square feet, it is slated to be one of the largest pollinator gardens in Delaware.

Renovation of the northern half of the site began on **9 November 2018** with a high profile volunteer workday. Press releases were submitted to ten newspapers around Delaware, a reporter

from the Cape Gazette was on-site taking photos and later wrote up an article about the event. The Delaware Beekeepers Association also advertised the event and came out to help. In all, we had 18 volunteers helping out this day. During the last half of October, Eric Zuelke purchased the seeds of 15 species of native herbaceous wildflowers and one grass from Ohio Prairie Nursery and Prairie Moon Nursery in Minnesota. The following is a list of what was seeded that day:

Asclepias syriaca	common milkweed
Asclepias tuberosa	butterfly milkweed
Baptisia tinctoria	yellow wild indigo
Chamaecrista fasciculata	partridge pea
Helenium autumnale	autumn sneezeweed
Helenium flexuosum	purple-headed sneezeweed
Monarda punctata	spotted beebalm
Penstemon digitalis	tall white beardtongue
Pycnanthemum tenuifolium	slender mountain-mint
Rudbeckia laciniata	green-head coneflower
Schizachyrium scoparium	little bluestem
Senna hebecarpa	wild senna
Solidago juncea	early goldenrod
Solidago odora	sweet goldenrod
Symphyotrichum novae-angliae	New England aster

The soil was tilled by hand using stiff-tined rakes, a handful of unhealthy & dead vegetation, and small trees that were now out of place were removed, and the site was hand-sown with the seeds mixed into a filler of rice hulls, then covered with pine needles. The *Schizachyrium scoparium* was not mixed into the overall mix, but sown separately in 10 distinct patches to keep the grass from being widely dispersed. We wanted the grass to remain in its own small bunches. It was a very successful day.