

History of the Delaware Native Plant Society (DNPS) Reforestation Project at Woodland Beach Wildlife Area

At its inception, one of the primary aspirations of the Delaware Native Plant Society was to do its part in curbing the loss of forest in Delaware. The principal method we wanted to use to achieve this objective was through the reforestation of fallow fields that were already retained in conservation status. Over the years, many people have contributed, and many hours have been spent in the implementation of this goal. This report is a summary of our efforts up to this point.

The First Exploratory Steps

The first exploratory conversation was between Eric Zuelke (DNPS Treasurer) and Bill Jones (Kent County Delaware Regional Wildlife Manager) during a phone call on **18 Dec 2019**.

On **6 Jan 2020**, Eric Zuelke Spoke with Bill Jones again and Mr. Jones related that he had three possible sites in mind at three different wildlife areas in Kent County. One of them was undergoing an agricultural lease renewal and we decided to wait until the those details were worked out to make any further decisions.

Another phone conversation on **22 Jan 2020** narrowed our choices down to two sites. One site was in the western part of Kent County in Blackiston Wildlife Area, and the other at WBWA, but finally on **28 Jan 2020**, Mr. Zuelke and Mr. Jones did a site visit to a field in Woodland Beach Wildlife Area (WBWA) near the McKay Field Office, and agreed that the site was the most suitable of the two. We then wrote up a Memorandum of Agreement to finalize the plans.

The Work That Has Been Accomplished

During the months of **January and February 2020**, Eric Zuelke applied for a \$1000.00 grant from the 2020 Delmarva Power Sustainable Communities Grant Program that was offered by Delmarva Power and administered by the Delaware Nature Society. On **31 Mar 2020**, we received word that the DNPS was awarded the grant. The money from this grant was used solely for this reforestation project at WBWA. It was used to purchase supplies, equipment, and live plants.

In the intervening time between the inception of this project and **21 Sep 2020**, Bill Jones retired on 1 Apr 2020, and Dylan Nicholson was hired to be his successor as the Kent County Regional Wildlife Manager. Eric Zuelke met with Dylan on this date for a simultaneously timed project at Prime Hook Wildlife Area and they discussed plans and details for this WBWA project. And it was soon after that a revised Memorandum of Agreement was signed by all parties.

Also through the months that followed word of our grant money award, Eric Zuelke used the money from the grant to buy bamboo stakes, regular wooden stakes for making tree locations, seed collecting buckets, a seed collecting apron from Prairie Moon Nursery, and on **28 Sep 2020**, Eric Zuelke visited Edge Of The Woods Nursery in Orefield, PA and bought the following live potted plants to be used at this site:

Scientific Name	Common Name	Quantity
<i>Aronia arbutifolia</i>	red chokeberry	2
<i>Corylus americana</i>	American hazelnut	1
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	witch-hazel	3
<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	winterberry holly	4
<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	spicebush	1
<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	black gum	1
<i>Rhododendron atlanticum</i>	coast azalea	1
Total		13

DNPS members also dug up, potted, and donated the following plants which were planted as well.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Quantity
<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	ironwood	1
<i>Carya</i> spp.	various hickory species	8
<i>Cornus florida</i>	flowering dogwood	1
<i>Cretaeus</i> spp.	hawthorn	3
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Eastern red cedar	1
<i>Ilex opaca</i>	American holly	5
<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	sweetbay magnolia	2
<i>Quercus</i> spp.	various oak species	7
<i>Quercus phellos</i>	willow oak	5
<i>Viburnum</i> spp.	Northern and/or Southern arrowwood	9
Total		42



Site before planting began (23 Oct 2020).

The first day of field work was completed on **23 Oct 2020**. Only two people were present that day, Eric Zuelke, and Dylan Nicholson. The plants that were purchased on Sep 28 were brought to the site in a U-Haul van and further moved to the site in an full sized Gator type UTV. Eric was able to install the signage this day, cut out some sweetgum and autumn olive, and plant 2 containerized plants with weed mat and protective stakes before needing to leave for the day.

2.75 work hours were completed for two people.

The second day of field work was completed on **25 Oct 2020**. Only two people were present that day, Eric Zuelke, and Rick Mickowski (DNPS Vice-President). The remaining containerized plants were planted with weed mat and protective stakes. We were now ready to do the direct-seeding of acorns and other nuts and seed, but an inspection of the surrounding forest revealed no mast worth collecting. It had been a hot, dry Spring of this year and that impacted the trees ability to set seed. We sent out an email to the DNPS membership asking if anyone had oak and hickory trees on their property that we could collect seed from. We never got any seed, but we did get more hand dug and potted plants from two members.

5.50 work hours were completed for two people.

On **31 Oct 2020**, the third day of field work was completed by just Eric Zuelke this day. Four donated potted plants were put into the ground along with weed mats and protective stakes, 15 acorns at 15 stakes were distributed randomly, and the eastern edge of the site was delineated with hardwood stakes and white flagging.

2.25 work hours completed for one person.

The project extended into November, and on **2 Nov 2020**, Eric Zuelke put four donated potted trees into the ground along with protective weed mats and stakes, and Dylan Nicholson helped out with moving plants with the Gator UTV.

2.25 work hours completed for two people.

Field work for the year was completed on **7 Nov 2020** when Eric Zuelke and volunteer Rick McCorkle planted the remaining containerized donated plants and placed weed mats and stakes.

5.00 work hours completed for two people

We planted 55 individual plants of at least 17 species. Some of the small seedling oaks and hickories cannot be identified until they grow larger, so undoubtedly our species count will be greater than 17 as we become able to identify them more accurately in future years.



After planting was completed for this season (7 Nov 2020).



Public signage (7 Nov 2020).