

Woodland Restoration Efforts

We bought additional acreage in 2012 and this summer the work in the woods begins. The additional land consists of 12 acres of prairie and about 2 acres of woods. These woods are adjacent to the other 3 acres we bought in 2005. Below are a couple of photos before any work began.



Our initial viewing of the first 3-acres of woods in 2005 was a struggle because it was filled with garlic mustard, box elder trees, and brambles. They had harvested the lumber many years ago and left the slash (tops of the trees) laying wherever it fell. These issues made managing it difficult because walking through it was a challenge. We tackled the box elder trees first, then the garlic mustard, and lastly the brambles – and we learned a great deal from this.

As we thought about and decided on a management plan for the new wooded acreage, we took our education from the prior woodland work and applied it. We reversed the plan, brushcutting through the brambles and non-native herbaceous plants using the saw blade of the brushcutter. Then we treated the clumps of stems from the brambles with 20% Garlon 4 and made the stems into brush piles. By doing this first, it allowed us to work on removing the boxelder trees without the tripping hazards of these brambles and also without them ripping at our clothes and skin. We realize some stems were probably missed being spraying; our plan is to spray the re-

sprouts in spring.

Next we tackled the boxelders (and continue to tackle them at the writing of this). This is a difficult tree rid the woods of with one cutting because when the cut portion is treated, it will resprout around the base, underneath the felling cut! We are prepared to re-cut and treat those in the spring as well. We have a pretty good system where Jim fells the larger trees and I cut them up and we both work to pile them into brush piles. It's amazing how much more can be done with both of us on chainsaws!

We have discovered many native plants in the woods already – Wild columbine and Blue cohosh to mention just a couple. We've also seen some new types of fungi. Our first 3 acres has yielded some very nice native plants without having to plant or seed the woods. They just needed to be free of the invasive plants!

This is a photo of where we are now in the process.



This fall, we will go through and spray for garlic mustard. We use the Escort cocktail (see below), applying it as a foliar spray using our backpack sprayers. This will be the first treatment of garlic mustard in these woods. In the other 3 acres, we worked diligently, spraying in spring and fall. We began treating with 2% glyphosate but after 4 years found the plants were coming up deformed, flowering, and setting seeds; we did not test to see if the seeds were viable as it didn't

matter at this point – we were not going to do double work, meaning spray AND pull the same plants!!! We now only spray in the spring and then go through and hand pull any that we missed or any that came up after our spraying. We consider this 3 acres to be “under control and manageable” for garlic mustard. So, there is hope!!

In winter, we will burn the many brush piles we have created by clearing the invasive bushes and trees. Although the brambles are native, we remove them because they wreak havoc with anyone who wants to manage the land for other invasives and they spread prolifically, creating less diversity. They do not produce fruit so they have little value as food for wildlife.

In spring of 2014, we’ll do another spray of garlic mustard before any of the other herbaceous plants have popped through the soil, then we’ll include this acreage in our hand pulling efforts. We’ll also blow the ashes from the burned brush piles using our backpack blower. Ashes are quite acidic and if left will change the composition of the soil. The goal is to allow the soil to rejuvenate its healthy microbes and other life forms. We will have to control weeds in these areas for the first year but we aren’t planning to seed these areas. Our hope is that the natives will fill in these spots as they have done in the first 3-acre woodland.

Escort cocktail is a 2 step process:

1. Make stock solution
 1. 2 oz Oust® or Escort®
 2. 1 gallon water
 3. 4 oz ammonia
 4. 16 oz Activator 90 surfactant
2. To mix foliar solution
 - 8 oz stock solution

- 3 gallon of water
- Blue Hi-liter dye