

The Hard Edges

Edges are hard!!! From a management perspective, the edges are never finished. Of all the things on our TO DO list, monitoring and maintaining the edges are a constant.

We purchased an additional 14 acres recently, 2 are woods and 12 are presently being cropped. Those 12 will eventually be planted to prairie so we'll need a management path and a fire break. As such, we have been working around the edge of the field, clearing a path.

Over the years of working on ecological restoration, I've had hours of thoughts and hours of conversations about "Edge Management." Edges seem to attract a lot of "bad stuff." How does this happen? I'm sure the wind is part of it, but it's also where animals and humans walk, tracking in "stuff" on the bottom of their hooves/shoes. It's where machinery travels with seeds and soils in the tires. And sometimes it's where the birds spend time and their predators lurk, leaving behind "semi-processed" seeds with their droppings and scat.

I realize as I've pondered this that edges exist everywhere. They are more than the divider between a prairie and woodland or a yard and a gravel road. Edges are the beginning of something new; a signal to the brain that there's something different happening. What edges do you monitor and maintain?