



ENVIRONMENT + SUSTAINABILITY

Native Prairie Restoration

ITC is supporting work by states and local communities to address declines in natural lands and habitats, including native prairies. Native prairie ecosystems – large, open areas of grassland which support a vast number of plants and animals – have been virtually eliminated from their historic range across the Midwest.

Electric transmission corridors can be part of the solution. Since the vegetation in these corridors must be low-growing in order to avoid interference with power lines, the spaces provide a unique opportunity for restoring native prairie. Following are two examples of ITC's work in this area.

Iowa: To help Iowa address its increasing loss of native prairie lands, ITC initiated three transmission line corridor prairie restorations in 2014 in the vicinity of Cedar Rapids, covering about 42 acres:

- Beverly Park, City of Cedar Rapids - six acres
- Sac and Fox Trail City Park, City of Cedar Rapids - 30 acres
- Squaw Creek Park, Linn County - six acres

First, ITC's environmental team partnered with the City of Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation Department and Linn County Conservation Department to remove non-native herbaceous and incompatible woody vegetation via mowing, tilling, prescribed burning, and herbicide application. ITC then seeded a diverse prairie mix featuring native grasses, wildflowers and broadleaf native plants. While creating a more diverse habitat in the parks, well-established prairie grasses will help prevent various types of invasive trees from taking root and potentially growing into the power lines. ITC's environmental team oversaw species selection and installation, and it conducts flora and fauna surveys to monitor project progress and maintenance needs.

Each of the three Iowa sites hold *Wildlife at Work* environmental site certifications from the Wildlife Habitat Council, which promotes and certifies habitat conservation and management on corporate lands through partnerships and education.

Michigan: Michigan also is dealing with a decline in native prairie lands. Support from ITC has bolstered efforts by The Nature Conservancy to improve the quality and health of imperiled and fragmented landscapes in Southeast Michigan's Lakeplain Oak Openings region. As a mix of forest and grassland supporting a number of rare plants and animals, the Oak Openings cover 1,300 square miles of glacial lakeplain in Monroe, Wayne and Washtenaw Counties in Michigan and in Lucas, Henry and Fulton Counties in Ohio.

ITC's support helped TNC:

- Increase beneficial habitat for native plants and animals, improve water quality and reduce negative impacts of invasive species
- Provide people with a connection to their land
- Follow-up on previous maintenance activities, enhancing long-term impacts

Non-native species like glossy buckthorn threaten the future of the Oak Openings by crowding out native plants. ITC's involvement enabled the Conservancy to conduct labor-intensive hand spraying at two properties in Wayne County where the organization is working with partners to bring back native species. Application of herbicide generally followed other work activities such as controlled burning or mowing to maximize effectiveness of treatments.



About ITC:

ITC is investing in a 21st century power grid to improve reliability, expand access to markets, lower the overall cost of delivered energy and allow new generating resources to interconnect to our transmission systems. In the course of our daily work, ITC integrates a sustainable approach to the environment, enabling us to contribute to the well-being of the communities we serve.



ITC's environmental team engages the services of Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT), which provides multidisciplinary environmental services worldwide.

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