

Prairie in Progress



Take us back to a blank canvas three years ago.....



The steps we led students through ---

1. What was the **landscape like here before?** (1850's surveyor's notes)
2. Why would restoring native prairie be a **benefit?**
3. What are the **abiotic conditions** that would affect plant growth?
4. What **native plants** could grow in these conditions?
5. What native plants could you select that would **assure blooming during the entire growing season?**
6. What and why are your **plant priorities?**



Always stressing being good stewards of the land, we folded and used newspaper planters.



Hundreds and hundreds of plants to plant meant folding **hundreds** and hundreds of paper planters!



Measuring square feet with



square feet.

Through the grant, lights were purchased for the three 7th grade science labs.



Most of the species were grown **from seed**. A few species were purchased as seedlings.

Students learned:

1. patience – prairie plants have a long life cycle and therefore long germination time.
2. how and why some seeds need to be scarified.
3. not all seed is viable.



Planting time came and so did a spring
monsoon!!

When we finally stopped sinking past our ankles in *mud*, it was time to plant the over 800 plants we had grown during the winter.



Newspaper was placed over the new 4 inches of topsoil that had been prepared weeks before. Six layers of newspaper were used to inhibit weed growth.



Mulch was the next layer to be added BEFORE planting our small little plants.



Yards and yards....





of mulch were dumped, one bucket at a time, on top of the newspaper.

Preparing the site took



time
and
kid
power.





Each student was assigned a role; teamwork, truly a thing of beauty!

And now, after months of planning, it was time to actually get the plants into the ground!





Following a plan and a design, students were taught to plant, and hula hoops were used to help them know where to plant.





A few plant specimens were added from the prairie site at Twin Oaks, our school forest.



After two and a half days, our prairie restoration specimen garden was finally planted.



The next two years we grew
and added more plants.....





Project in Progress
a Partnership Project
developed by
7th Grade students at DCEMS





And weeded.....





To MS
Jill
Meyer

PERISHABLE



and learned.....





The first year the prairie area seemed to sleep, the next year creep....

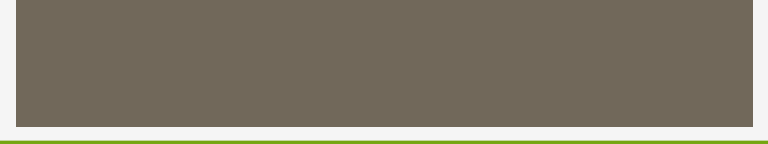


And last year, it began to leap!

We put a [bluebird](#) house in early last spring and had a nesting pair of bluebirds move in!

And yes, they are back this spring!





This year we once again grew plants in our classroom for “the prairie”. Trying to make the prairie be its own weed reducer required us to germinate and plant more grasses. About 130 new seedlings were added at the end of May.

Our work here is done, except for the maintenance. Now it is on to bigger restoration projects.