

Follow Up Report On Grant To North Cedar Natural Resource Project

This is an ongoing 4 or more year project within the city limits of Cedar Falls in the North Cedar neighborhood encompassing 16 acres

- 1) Our project has been to create bird viewing platforms and habitat that are suitable to migrating birds and some of Iowa's regular bird species. At the same time we will keep the area free from motorized vehicles and allow the prairie, savannah, and new tree and shrub species time to grow.

- 2) The NCNRP has set several goals. They are to create a unique green space within the city limits of Cedar Falls, Iowa. Converting 16 acres of space that was FEMA purchased area from private homes after the 2008 500 year flood. Developing of 5 distinct ecosystems to include: Savanna, Natural Iowa prairie, wetland, upland forest, lowland forest. Create an outdoor classroom for the adjacent k-6 North Cedar Elementary School. Establish 2 bird watching platforms, duck/waterfowl nesting sites. Remain a natural resource space with mowed walking trails. No motorized vehicles are allowed in the space. Planting of hardy native Iowa tree species. Planting of Iowa native shrub specie attract bird species in the resource space. Goals may change as the project goes forth. At each of the bird viewing stations we want to make a weather resistant trail marker with photos and names of birds common to the area. A similar station would be made for the prairie plants and for the trees.

IOU and Prairie Rapids Audubon Society funds were used to purchase the wood for the bird viewing benches. A volunteer built and installed them. Two benches have been built. One is along the center path between the wetlands and the other is in the lowland forest near the willows. More benches will be built after the wetlands have been made deeper. These sites were selected based on the best cover and vantage points for viewing. The funds were also used to purchase hardy native Iowa shrub specie. These include hazelnut, gray dogwood, ninebark, and highbush cranberry totaling

1000 shrubs. The 5th and 6th graders from the neighboring North Cedar Elementary School helped plant the shrubs along with adult volunteers.

- 3) Since the benches were installed and the shrubs were planted 40 species of birds have been identified. This number is expected to increase. The students at North Cedar have studied prairie plants and cycles of plants, also, and made various trips to the wetlands, forests, prairie, and savannah. Joni Krejchi, a North Cedar 5th grade teacher wrote, “A big thank you for showing kids how to do the right thing, just because it needs to be done. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to help.”

The principal of North Cedar, Jen Hartman wrote after Jim Newcomb, the head volunteer for the NCNRP presented a power-point presentation to the administrators and principals of Cedar Falls. “I just wanted to thank you for putting together such a great presentation for our elementary principals. Pam Zeigler and Adrian Talbot, (K-12 curriculum planners) shared that everyone is very excited to come to “our” nature area!! I am so proud to be part of this great project! I know our teachers love the area and working with you. But now, I think other schools will join in the fun as well. Thanks again.”

