

## **Wetlands & Open Spaces Annual Committee Report - April 27th, 2010**

### **WETLAND COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

Hainesville is one of very few villages in the country(state) taking on the task of village-wide ecological stewardship. Open space has usually been interpreted as nice grassy areas on which people play. Hainesville has accepted the responsibility of restoring much of our open space, which is unusable anyway, to what nature had intended for the area.

The process began this year. We mowed the meadow along Hainesville Road and the meadow in front of Misty Hill. Various types of native flower and grass seed have been purchased to sow in these meadows since we have wetland portions as well as prairie areas. We will add some flowers to the southwest corner of the Misty Hill meadow which will attract butterflies to establish a Butterfly Garden.

Nature is very interesting. In the case of native flowers, their first year is spent putting down roots, so in case there is a fire they will be able to survive. The next year the green plant emerges, and finally the third year the flowers bloom. So patience is needed.

Wetland seed was also purchased for the southeast corner of Cranberry Lake where the Phragmites, the tall cane-like invasive plants that have plumes in the fall, were removed last year.

An enormous undertaking successfully removed the invasive plants and other scrub vegetation in the front of our most visible ponds to include Deerpoint pond, two Misty Hill ponds and Brittany pond along with clearing the street side of the area of Antler Park. The large Phragmites stand at the south end of Deerpoint pond were herbicided and burned this year,

The 5-year restoration plan for Cranberry Lake continues with cutting and herbiciding buckthorn re-sprouts. An additional multi-year plan has begun to control the cattails around Cranberry Lake. The Lake County Health Department has classified Cranberry Lake as a distressed lake because it has more than 5% cattails surrounding and encroaching the lake. A grant was submitted to Lake County Storm Water Management Commission to share the cost of the cattail control project. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful.

The Wetland Committee and the Public Works Department combined funds to replace 25 distressed or dead parkway trees. This activity was in conjunction with pruning the parkway trees throughout the village. This project was undertaken to provide better visibility and safety as well as promote healthy tree growth. All remnants from this activity were chipped and distributed around the Cranberry Lake walking path.

Unfortunately, in spite of the extraordinary efforts of a few dedicated residents, our entrance planting project was not as successful as hoped. A combination of uncooperative weather, the choice of annuals and lack of proper watering equipment caused many entrances to have "crispy critters" rather than the beautiful color we anticipated. However, the entrance medians on Cranberry Lake Drive were ablaze with color from the snapdragons that grew prolifically.

This experience has not been in vain. We have learned and are taking corrective measures. This spring we will be planting native flowers that are perennials and drought resistant; therefore, they will require less water once established. Public works has purchased equipment to improve watering efficiency, so we are looking forward to a much more successful planting season.

Two clean up activities were organized this year. The first was with several of the village children who enthusiastically collected bags and bags of trash in the woods along east Big Horn Drive. The second was our village-wide clean up at Brittany Park, around Cranberry Lake and along Hainesville Road which was

followed by a village picnic at Brittany Park. Many thanks to the village staff, summer workers, EMA and Community Event committees as well as all the participating residents for making these events successful.

As trustee, I have attended several conferences this year. They include the Illinois Municipal League Conference and most recently Green Town whose goal is to create informed and thoughtful residents and agencies to be prudent in their use of our natural resources in a conscious effort to improve our environment. I have had an opportunity to mention to many participants the efforts Hainesville is making. Everyone has been most impressed because they realize that our undertaking is not simply a matter of beautification, but will create a sanctuary to relieve stress, an attractiveness that will increase property values and a desirable location for commercial development.