

## **Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant boosts Cub Scout improvement project at Churchill Park**

Glen Ellyn - Restoration efforts at Churchill Park received a boost with a state matching grant that helps fund a Glen Ellyn Cub Scout Den 5 of Pack 158 project at the park.

The Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant, whose purpose is to increase the value of wildlife habitat sites through youth education and hands-on experience, will help offset the cost of purchasing native plant material as part of an ecological restoration project at the park, which borders Churchill School. The scouts, who are students at Churchill and Ben Franklin School, and their families will help cut and clear non-native, invasive shrubs and reintroduce native plants.

The grant program is sponsored by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Division of Education, the Illinois Conservation Foundation (ICF) and the Jadel Family Foundation. The program funds projects that "emphasize student/youth involvement with planning, development and maintenance and increase the educational and wildlife habitat values of the site."

Through its efforts, the ICF has generated individual and corporate donations & gifts for the Schoolyard Habitat Action Program. ICF helps conduct conservation and educational programs for students from kindergarten through high school. For example, nature centers, schools and youth groups have planted prairie plots, created wetlands, established butterfly gardens, built bird-nesting boxes, and developed outdoor labs for monitoring plants and wildlife. To date, the ICF has raised more than \$100,000 for this program.

Leading the local project are park district naturalist Renae Frigo and horticulturalist Jill Voegtle. According to Frigo, the scout project dovetails nicely with park district environmental policy and restoration plans for Churchill Park.

"Churchill Park is overrun with non-native plants," Frigo said. "Staff has been actively restoring the site with the help of students, scouts and attendees of public workdays. These efforts will be enhanced by the Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Action grant."

Environmental policy highlights include: developing and implementing plans for the re-establishment, restoration and protection of native ecosystems; providing recreational access to and enhancing public awareness of such restored and protected natural sites; utilizing native species for park landscaping; eliminating or controlling exotic and invasive plant and animal species that inhibit ecological diversity and integrity and working with community agencies and organizations to develop and enhance a strong environmental ethic.

Clearing will take place on Saturday, March 27, from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. and on Sunday, April 11, from 1 p.m.-4 p.m. Planting is scheduled for Saturday, April 17, from 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m. and on Saturday,



May 15 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

To view plans for Churchill Park and park district environmental initiatives, please visit the park district Website at [www.gepark.org](http://www.gepark.org). More information about the Schoolyard Habitat Action Program is available at <http://www.dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/grants.htm>.

#### **About the Glen Ellyn Park District**

Established in 1919, Glen Ellyn Park District's mission is "driven to foster diverse, community based leisure opportunities, through a harmonious blend of quality recreation programs, facilities and open space which will enhance the quality of life into the future."

The park district serves 35,000 residents in Glen Ellyn, unincorporated Glen Ellyn, Wheaton, Carol Stream, Lombard and Glendale Heights. The park district owns and maintains 30 parks and facilities and offers cultural, athletic and general interest programs and special events for its residents, from infants through senior citizens.

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