

THE ROLE OF WEED MANAGEMENT ON A MULTI-PARCEL PRAIRIE RESTORATION SITE WITHIN AN URBAN SETTING. Heidi Zajack, Melanie Oetzman, and Brian John Brezinski, Undergraduate Student - Applied Science Program, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, WI 54751-0790, Conservation Project Specialist and Grazing Lands Specialist, River Country Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc., Altoona, WI 54720.

In the fall of 2005, a group of non-profit organizations and businesses in the Chippewa River Valley area formed the Prairie Partnership, a collaborative partnership with the goal of developing a 51 acre corridor of remnant prairie owned by Xcel Energy, Inc. The Prairie Partnership is interested in developing these remnants into an urban green space and an outdoor classroom, providing environmental education and stewardship opportunities for the community.

Since its inception, the Prairie Partnership has been successful in acquiring grants to allow a 501(c)3 non-profit, River Country Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) Inc., to coordinate the Prairie Partnership, and carry out the Partnership's goals. Xcel Energy Inc. has approved the Partnership to begin restoration and environmental education projects on the remnant prairie.

In the spring of 2006, River Country RC&D and the Prairie Partnership sent out over 1,000 informational brochures to the community about the Prairie Partnership, and held 7 educational outreach events on the remnant prairie. Monthly field surveys were conducted from June through September of 2006 to aid in the formation of a management plan. The remnant prairie was divided into 10 sites, varying in size from 2 to 10 acres. Each site was inventoried to determine its relative quality, and restoration capability.

A management plan is being developed to help determine the capacity for restoration on each of the 10 designated sites. In addition, this plan will develop a framework for incorporating environmental education and community outreach into each phase of the restoration process.