August 2000 - The Greening of the Southwest Bike/ Ped Path

By Sue Reindollar

During the spring of 1886 the four-mile stretch of corridor leading from Fitchburg onwards towards Madison was teeming with the muscle and sweat of the gandy dancers, those laborers who toiled with hand picks, shovels, draglines, and horses to construct the Illinois Central Rail System. Now, over a century later construction workers with bulldozers, ditch diggers, steam shovels, blowtorches, and draglines toil once again, converting the same four-mile stretch of corridor to a bike and pedestrian path.

The corridor is again in transition. This time, this new beginning, in tune with the challenges of a new millenium, gives us the opportunity to rethink what we should be doing with this green space as our gift to the future.

Those who ride or walk along the corridor, plus the property owners bordering this space, now have the chance to work together to create an area which will enhance not only the needs of the homeowners but the pleasure of the users of the path.

To many of us that track area was the solace after the stress of a day's work where we walked our dogs or just meandered through the green space. So what can we do to recover our cherished backyards and improve our experience as users of the "tracks"?

Perhaps first we need to give some thought to the ecology of the corridor. After all it has a life of its own which needs to be respected. It has long been a migratory route and sanctuary for birds and butterflies. Over time observers have noted as many as 130 species of birds moving along the corridor. There have been an occasional deer and a coyote, along with the usual complement of possums, raccoons, squirrels, chipmunks, and forever-fecund rabbits. We are not the only creatures who leave tracks on the path.

The plant communities that border the corridor are just as diverse. Between Commonwealth St. and Spooner St. there is a shady, damp area, where the marsh aster, jewelweed, and woodland sunflowers grow. The areas paralleling Gregory St. are bound by a degraded remnant of open oak woodland in the adjacent City of Madison property where many residents enjoy walking their dogs.

Reclaiming the corridor for a new purpose is an invitation to plant or, at the very least, either do nothing with the area or erect a manmade barrier. The fact that there are invasive noxious species along the tracks is warning enough that we must be aware of what we introduce to the area.

Japanese knotweed (often called Japanese bamboo by many living along the tracks who curse its invasive habit), is already prolific along the Gregory St. portion of the track. It is so tenacious and invasive that it has the capability of growing through asphalt. It took only a few days, not weeks, for it to send up new sprouts within the graded area of the track when the ground was disturbed. It's almost like a science fiction horror movie where you become encircled by this horrific plant and smothered.

Another noxious invasive plant is garlic mustard which takes over, as it has in Glenwood Children's Park, and shades out plants that are more desirous. It is a biennial (two-year growth cycle) and must be pulled for at least two years in succession, taking care to destroy the plant and roots before it flowers. Information on these and other invasive plants, plus numerous pictures and suggestions on what

would be good to plant, will be available in a three-ring binder in Monroe St. and Sequoya libraries.

For those of us who want to plant a privacy screen or improve our space, here are some possibilities to think about. Diversity is the key to a healthy environment, drawing a variety of insects, birds, butterflies, and animals to attempt an ecological balance. Native plants and trees have evolved to survive in our local climates and soils, and they are very hardy, requiring little, if any, maintenance.

If you have full or partial shade on your backlot, then some understory trees growing from fifteen to thirty-five feet are:

1. serviceberry or Juneberry has wonderful blueberry-tasting fruit for birds and people;
2. Pagoda dogwood produces blue-black fruit and features a layered shape;
3. chokecherry is fast growing and spreads;
4. redbud has delicate purple-pink flowers;
5. wild plum has edible fruit and it flowers in the spring.

Popular trees or shrubs which grow eight to ten feet tall are:

1. the viburnums such as highbush cranberry with red berries support the birds in winter; nannyberry, arrowwood, and blackhaw are the other good landscape viburnums;
2. dogwoods, such as redosier, spreads and creates dense screening and berries; gray dogwood forms clumps for good screening;
3. staghorn or smooth sumac has beautiful fall color with berries popular with the birds but spreads and needs lots of room.

All the above trees or shrubs are native to Wisconsin.

A wonderful nursery to try is Reeseville Ridge Nursery owned by Daryl and Mary Kromm who travel around gathering seeds and propagating their own woody plants of native and non-native trees. As with many of the nurseries specializing in native plants and trees, their main business is selling bare root stock (which is reputed to produce a healthier and sturdier growing tree than the balled trees) in either

plugs of one foot or root stock of two feet. Obviously this means that you have to be patient to get the screening you want.

Let's not leave out the flower color and fragrance, the invitation to delight. This is where the fun begins. Some like their yards natural and others like their yards cultivated with varying degrees of seclusion. Low maintenance gardens might include daylilies combined with purple and yellow coneflowers, coreopsis, Culver's root, bee balm or Monarda, rattlesnake master, butterfly weed, cardinal flowers, Rudbeckia hirta (black-eyed susans), meadow rue, Joe Pye weed, and various milkweeds. How about some of the beautiful grasses (big blue stem and little blue stem),some which grow four to seven feet tall. But ask your local ecologists and they will say that it is better to select plants of local origin to preserve local gene pools and to avoid introduction of potentially invasive ecotypes.

The following nurseries might be good choices:

- Jean Bawden of Earthspirit Farm, 4385 Oak Hill Rd. Oregon, WI 53575 (e-mail: bdn7458@mailbag.com);
- for bare-root seedlings, Daryl and Mary Kromm at Reeseville Ridge Nursery, 309 S. Main Box 171 Reeseville, WI 53579 (e-mail: rrn@globaldialogue.com);
- for the unusual in trees and shrubs, Stonewall Nursery 763 Hwy 14 Oregon;
- for specializing in shrubs and trees, Little Valley Farm 5693 Snead Creek Rd. Spring Green 53588 (608-935-3324);
- for plants and seeds, Prairie Nursery Box 306 Westfield, WI 53964 (1-800-476-9453);
- and also for plants and seeds, Prairie Ridge Nursery 9738 Overland Rd. Mount Horeb, WI 53572-2832 (608-437-5245).

Contributors to this article were Jean Bawden of Earthspirit Farm; Doug Evans of Fox Ave., Dudgeon-Monroe neighborhood; Laura Brown of Piper Dr., Midvale Heights neighborhood and former president of the Madison Wild Ones, a group promoting native plantings in your own yard; Mary Kromm of Reeseville Ridge Nursery;

Amy D. McDaniel of Euclid Ave., Dudgeon-Monroe neighborhood and vice president of the Madison Audubon Society.

December 2000 - Planting Along the Path - Sources and Suggestions

By Sue Reindollar

Now that the grinding and screeching has subsided along the corridor, we can dream of spring and where we can plant. Even the half-hearted gardener loves this time of year when there is just the slightest hint of spring. For those just a bit more committed to digging in the dirt, there are the seed and plant catalogues spread out on the table with those enhanced photos that somehow don't look exactly like their image when planted in your backyard.

Here's some suggestions to help you focus on your plot of ground bordering the corridor or fuel some ideas about what you think might be a good choice to plant in the many areas where no one takes stewardship. All of us in the neighborhoods along the corridor will benefit by enhancing the path environment. Look at the three-ring notebooks in both Sequoya and Monroe Street libraries. There is a wealth of information there.

The U-W Arboretum and the Madison chapter of the Wild Ones, a group dedicated to native plantings, are co-sponsoring their annual Native Landscaping Conference at the Alliant Energy Center (formerly the Dane Co. Expo Center) Saturday, March 24, 9-4 p.m. Speakers and exhibitors hope to inspire homeowners to learn how to design, restore and manage native Wisconsin ecosystems and find ways to implement ecologically sustainable landscapes which benefit people and wildlife too. The U-W Arboretum is one of the best places available to observe various species and their growing habits. The McKay Center has lists of the vegetation and the location. Check the website for information: http://wiscinfo.doit.wisc.edu/arboretum/

Then there is the Garden Expo at the Alliant Energy Center February 9,10, & 11, an event which always inspires even the total non-gardener. There are multitudes of exhibits and speakers during the three-day event.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens has many informative lectures plus the gardens themselves, which demonstrate ways to redesign your own landscape. Some lectures are: "Starting Your Garden from Seed" February 3, with director of Horticulture, Jeff Epping; "Creating a Perennial Garden" February 20, with renowned gardener Joan Severa; "Gardening for Birds & Butterflies" February 27, with horticulturist and naturalist Sally Roth; "Pruning Pointers" April 21 & April 28, with Jeff Epping; and a workshop, "Effortless Gardening" April 22, with Miriam Levenson. There is a charge for these lectures so check with Olbrich.

The U-W Extension is another good source. Their website is loaded with gardening calendar of events and specific gardening information. Also listed there are the times and topics of the Wisconsin Gardener programs on public television. The website url is: www.hort.wisc.edu/mastergardener.

Call or watch the newspapers for more information.

July 2001 - Paving the Path with Nature

By Kelly J. Mitchell

Bicyclists and pedestrians are not the only beneficiaries of the new SW Path, which opens on Saturday morning July 28 with an informal bike parade from terminus to terminus. Butterflies, birds and native plants will have a new home along the four-mile corridor. A massive landscaping project is striving to beautify the path and increase wildlife by restoring native plants, shrubs and trees to the area.

"Native landscaping restores the type of plants that once occupied our state, many of which are now endangered or threatened," says Laura

Brown, native gardener and one of the founding members of Friends of the SW Path. "People often travel miles away from home to a place in the country, somewhere that looks wild. Why not make that same environment where you live so you can enjoy it all of the time? That is the feeling we are trying to create here, an escape in the middle of the city."

The path is currently lined with hearty weeds and scrubby trees. Transforming this eyesore into a vision of natural beauty is the mission of Friends of the SW Path. The group is a coalition of neighbors who live along the path and other committed path users who are working to transform the path into a natural paradise.

"There is nothing like walking through an area with prairie plants on a hot summer day. With the grasses blowing in the wind and the insects chirping, you feel like you are the only person there," says Jane Kuzma, owner of Bur Oak Designs, a landscape architecture firm.

Creating a natural resource in the middle of the city is the goal of the Friends of the SW Path. They hope to make the path more enjoyable for the bicyclists and pedestrians who use it as well as the neighbors who live along this new transportation corridor. Just as important, they hope to draw in an interesting array of birds, insects and other wildlife. This living laboratory will provide learning experiences for children and adults alike, with a wide array of native plants to identify and wildlife to observe in their natural habitat.

"Native plantings will improve the soil and reduce runoff," says Kuzma. "The roots of prairie plants are quite deep. This works to aerate the soil, which allows rainwater to be absorbed, greatly reducing runoff. In addition, prairie plants prefer to not be fertilized." The runoff from fertilizer and pesticides in traditional landscaping has been linked to reduced water quality in our lakes and streams. Plantings will provide natural border for neighbors along path

Residents have viewed the state-owned land along the rail corridor as an extension of their own backyard. The completion of the path means

less privacy for residents living along the corridor, with bicyclists and pedestrians traveling through an area that was once very quiet. This makes the planned natural borders even more important. In fact, some neighbors have already started using native plants on this strip of land in advance of the Friends of the SW Path efforts.

Rob Schoenbrunn, a resident of the Westmorland Neighborhood who lives next to the path, has had a large native garden in his yard for six years. Recently some of his neighbors have let him plant and scatter seeds for native plantings in the area between their property and the path. "The new path will bring a lot of traffic through our backyard," explains Schoenbrunn. "Native plantings are going to help offset this, it is going to be really pretty." Volunteers are needed to help make this dream a reality.

"There is something exciting about starting something so tiny and seeing it fill in and bloom," says Jean Bawden owner of Earthspirit Farm. "What a sense of satisfaction in knowing you helped create this landscape that you and so many others will enjoy in the future." The Friends of the SW Path would someday like to see native plants along the entire four-mile corridor. That takes planning, dedication and lots of hard work throughout the multi-year effort. Volunteers will be needed every step of the way from preparing the soil to planting, watering and weeding.

"A lot of people think native plants take care of themselves," says Bawden. "While this is true after a while, the first three years are critical. Weeds can choke out the new plants and create a problem situation."

Already, neighbors and path enthusiasts are stepping up to do their part. Several native gardeners, like Brown and Sue Reindollar another founder of the group, have agreed to donate plants and seeds from their own yards. Volunteering on a project like this is a great way for non-gardeners to learn, working alongside experienced gardeners.

"We are working to create a multi-seasonal landscape. In the spring, visitors will see May Apples and Virginia Bluebells; in the summer, large numbers of Black-eyed Susans and Yellow Coneflowers; in the fall, Goldenrod and purple, white and blue Asters," describes Brown. "There will be something new to look forward to all-year long."

Interested in volunteering? Contact Friends of the SW Path Sue Reindollar (233-9383 or ssreindo@facstaff.wisc.edu) or Laura Brown (274-9367 or ljbrown@chorus.net) to be added to the list of volunteers.

September 2001 - The Prairie at the Odana Entrance to the SW Bike Path Is Planted

By Sue Reindollar

We've completed the prairie planting at the Odana entrance to the SW Bike Path. Stop by and contemplate how beautiful that area will be next summer. All 320 plants plus about 60 donations from other prairies are ready to establish themselves in their new home. Some of them are darn glad they finally made it into the earth.

I want to thank those who worked with me to accomplish this. It was especially gratifying to have people helping from all over the city:

- Jana Stewart from Westmorland and Lyn Frueh from Piping Rock Rd. who organized and made the posters
- Rose Ann Scott from the Atwood (Isthmus) bike path prairie who planted and watered
- Jerry Gunderson from Middleton and the Atwood (Isthmus) prairie who helped choose plants, gave advice,and designed the Odana space plus he is contributing plants, some of them rare ones
- Ed Daley from Dudgeon-Monroe who raked and hauled all the sand and helped pull wild grapes out of the trees to gain more sunlight

- Devon Lee Tedesco, Nancy Leff, and Samara Leff from Westmorland who planted and planted and planted
- Cami Peterson from Dudgeon-Monroe who planted and planted and does the DMNA parks also
- Lisa, Seth, and Simon Weaver and John Clark from Westmorland who planted and planted and watered
- Ruth Robarts from Dudgeon-Monroe who took charge of the street side and planted and watered and planted
- Tom Kraustkof from Midvale Heights who dug right in and took charge of the path side of the prairie
- Deb Hall from Nakoma who watered and planted and hauled water and planted and who will have the best view of the prairie from across Odana
- Dianne Hanson from Greentree (White Oaks) who was totally organized and planted the baby plants, the grasses, and the butterfly weed on this the last day of planting.

Thanks to you all. Now we hope for rain so we don't have to water. If you are riding by and have extra water in your water bottle, give the plants a drink.

The next phase of the project is to brush our the buckthorn, honeysuckle, and wild grape that shade the prairie area. Also, we will need to watch the plants to see if they need water. Hope for rain.

Interested in volunteering? Contact Friends of the SW Path Sue Reindollar (233-9383 or ssreindo@facstaff.wisc.edu) or Laura Brown (274-9367 or ljbrown@chorus.net) to be added to the list of volunteers.

May 2002 - Plantings and Seeding Midvale to Beltline

(109 species)

By Laura Brown

Shrubs and trees (12 sp.)

Amelanchier sp (Juneberry ,Service berry)	Prunus americana (American Plum)
Cercis canadensis (Redbud)	Prunus virginiana (Chokecherry)
Cornus alternifolia (Pagoda dogwood)	Rhus glabra (Smooth Sumac)
Cornus racemosa (Gray dogwood)	Sambucus canadensis (Elderberry)
Cornus sericea (Redosier dogwood)	Viburnum dentatum (Arrowwood viburnum)
Corylus americana (American Hazelnut)	Viburnum trilobum (Highbush cranberry)
Vines (fence at Beltline)(seed) (2 sp)	
Clematis virginiana (Virgin's bower)	Vitis riparia (Wild Grape)
Grasses/sedges/reeds (16 sp)	
Andropogon gerardii (Big bluestem)	Hystrix patula (Bottlebrush grass)
Bouteloua curtipendula (Side oats grama)	Panicum virgatum (Switch grass)
Carex grayii (Common bur sedge)	Schizachyrium scoparius (Little bluestem)
Carex lanuginosa (wooly sedge)	Scirpus atrovirens (dark green bulrush)
Carex stipata (awl-fruited sedge)	Scirpus cyperinus (wool grass)
Carex vulpinoidea (Fox sedge)	Sorghastrum nutans (Indian grass)
Elymus canadensis (Canada wild rye)	Spartina pectinata (cord grass)
Glyceria striata (Fowl manna grass)	Sporobolus heterolepis(Prairie dropseed)
Flowering plants (79 sp)	
Achillea sp. (Yarrow)	Liatris pychnostachya (Prairie blazing star)
Actaea pachypoda (White Baneberry)	Liatris spicata (dense blazing star)
Actaea rubra (Red Baneberry)	Lobelia cardinalis (cardinal flower)
Agastache foeniculum (Anise Hyssop)	Lobelia syphylitica (Great blue lobelia)
Allium cernuum (Nodding wild onion)	Monarda fistulosa (Bergamot)
Anemone cylindrica (Thimbleweed)	Oenothera biennis (Evening primrose)
Aquilegia canadensis (Columbine)	Oenothera fruticosa (Sundrops)

Arisaema triphyllum (Jack in the Pulpit)	Parthenium integrifolium (Wild quinine)
Asclepias incarnata (Swamp milkweed)	Penstemon grandiflorus (Large-flowered
Asclepias syriaca (common milkweed)	Penstemon sp. (White penstemon)
Asclepias tuberosa (Butterfly weed)	Physostegia virginiana (Obedient plant)
Aster ericoides(Heath aster)	Polygonatum biflorum (Solomon's Seal)
Aster laevis (Smooth aster)	Pycnanthemum pilosum (Hairy mountain mint)
Aster novae-angliae (New England aster)	Pycnanthemum virginianum (Virginia Mountain
Aster sagittifolius (Arrow-leaved aster)	Ratibida pinnata (Yellow coneflower)
Baptisia australis (blue false indigo)	Rudbeckia hirta (Black-eyed Susan)
Baptisia leucantha (White false indigo)	Rudbeckia subtomentosa (Sweet Black-eyed
Cacalia atriplicifolia (Pale Indian plantain)	Rudbeckia triloba (Branched coneflower)
Campanula americana (tall bellflower)	Ruellia humilis (perennial petunia)
Cassia hebecarpa (Wild senna)	Scrophularia lanceolata (Figwort)
Cimicifuga racemosa (Fairy candles)	Silphium integrifolium (rosin weed)
Coreopsis lanceolata (Lanceleaf coreopsis)	Silphium laciniatum (compass plant)
Coreopsis palmata (stiff coreopsis)	Silphium perfoliatum (cup plant)
Dalea purpurea (Purple prairie clover)	Silphium terebinthinaceum (prairie dock)
Echinacea pallida (Pale purple coneflower)	Sisyrinchium campestre (Blue-eyed grass)
Echinacea purpurea (Purple coneflower)	Smilacina racemosa (False Solomon's Seal)
Eryngium yuccifolium (Rattlesnake master)	Smilacina stellata (Starry Solomon's Plume)
Eupatorium maculatum (Spotted Joe Pye)	Solidago rigida (Stiff goldenrod)
Eupatorium perfoliatum (Boneset)	Solidago sp (Tall Goldenrod)
Eupatorium purpureum (Sweet Joe Pye)	Solidago sp.(willow-leaved goldenrod?)
Filipendula rubra (Queen of the Prairie)	Solidago speciosa (Showy goldenrod)
Gentiana andrewsii (Bottle gentian)	Solidago ulmifolia (Elm-leaved goldenrod)
Helianthus grosseserratus (Sawtoothed	Thalictrum dasycarpum (meadow rue)
Helianthus laetiflorus (Showy sunflower)	Trandescantia ohiensis (spiderwort)
Helianthus occidentalis (Western sunflower)	Verbena stricta (Hoary vervain)
Heliopsis helianthoides (Ox-eye sunflower)	Vernonia noveboracensis (Ironweed)
Hypericum pyramidatum (Great St. John's	Veronicastrum virginicum (Culver's root)
Lespedeza capitata (Roundheaded	Zizia aptera (Golden Alexanders)
Liatris aspera (Rough blazing star)	Zizia aurea (Golden Alexanders)

Liatris ligulostylis (Blazing star)	

December 2002 - Plantings and Seeding Odana to Fox

By Sue Reindollar

***Asterisks follow species in the prairie at the Odana entrance to the path. The area is also seeded, as is the length of the path

Alumroot	Heuchera richardsonii***
Anise Hyssop	Agastache foeniculum***
Bergamot	Monarda fistulosa ***
Big Bluestem	Andropogon geradi ***
Black-Eyed Susan	Rudbeckia hirta ***
Blue Vervain	Verbena hastala ***
Blue-eyed Grass	Sisyrinchium campestre ***
Bottlebrush Grass	Hystrix patula***
Branching Coneflower	Rudbeckia triloba***
Butterfly Weed	Asclepias tuberosa ***
Canada Wild Rye	Elymus Canadensis
Cardinal Flower	Lobelia cardinalis***
Closed or Bottle Gentian	Gentiana andrewsii ***
Columbine	Aquilegia Canadensis ***
Common Evening Primrose	Oenothera biennis***
Common Milkweed	Asclepias syriaca
Compass Plant	Silphium laciniatum
Cream Gentian	Gentiana alba ***
Culver's Root	Veronicastrum virginicum ***
Dotted Mint	Monarda punctata ***
Early Goldenrod	Solidago juncea
False Boneset	Kuhnia eupatoriodes

Gaura	Gaura biennis***
Giant St.John's-wort	Hypericum pyramidatum***
Glade Mallow	Napaea dioica
Golden Alexanders	Zizia aurea***
Great Blue Lobelia	Lobelia siphilitica***
Grey Goldenrod	Solidago nemoralis
Harebell	Campanula rotundifolia***
Indian grass	Sorghastrum nutans***
Ironweed	Vernonia fasciculate ***
Jacob's Ladder	Polemonium reptans***
June Grass	Koeleria macrantha***
Lance-leafed Loosestrife	Lysimachia lanceolata***
Large-flowered Beard-tongue	Penstemon grandiflorus
Lead Plant	Amorpha canescens ***
Liatris Rough Blazing Star	Liatris pynostachya***
Little Bluestem	Schizachyrium scoparium **
Meadow Blazingstar	Liatris ligulistylis ***
Monkey Flower	Mimulus ringens
Mountain Mint	Pycnanthemum virginianum***
Needlegrass	Stipa spartea***
New England Aster	Aster novae-angliae***
New Jersey Tea	Ceanothus americanus***
Nodding Onion	Allium cernuum***
Pale Indian Plantain	Cacalia muhlenbergii
Pale Purple Coneflower	Echinacea pallida***
Partridge Pea	Chamaecrista fasciculate
Prairie Blazingstar	Liatris pycnostachya***
Prairie Dropseed	Sporobolus heterolepsis **
Prairie Onion	Allium stellatum***
Prairie Sundrops	Oenothera pilosella***
Prickly Pear	Opuntia humifusa***
Purple Coneflower	Echinacea purpurea ***

Purple Prairie Clover	Dalea purpurea ***
Queen of the Prairie	Filipendula rubra***
Rattlesnake Master	Eryngium yuccifolium ***
Rough Blazing Star	Liatris aspera***
Saw-tooth Sunflower	Helianthus grosseserratus***
Scribner's Panic Grass	Panicum scribnerianum***
Shooting Star	Dodecatheon meadia***
Showy Goldenrod	Solidago speciosa***
Sideoats Grama	Bouteloua curtipendula***
Silky Wild Rye	Elymus villosus
Sky Blue Aster	Aster azureus***
Smooth Blue Aster	Aster laevis***
Smooth Penstemon (white)	Penstemon digitalis***
Solomon's Seal	Polygonatum canaliculatum ***
Spiderwort	Tradescantia ohiensis***
Spiked Lobelia	Lobelia spicata***
Stiff Coreopsis	Coreopsis palmate***
Stiff Gentian	Gentianella quinquefolia***
Stiff Goldenrod	Solidago rigida ***
Sweet Everlasting	Gnaphalium obtusifolium
Sweet Joe-Pye-Weed	Eupatorium purpureum
Switch Grass	Panicum virgatum***
Tall Bellflower	Campanula Americana ***
Tall Boneset	Eupatorium altissimum
Thimbleweed	Anemone virginiana
Turk's Cap Lily	Lilium michiganense
Virgin's Bower	Clematis virginiana
White False Indigo	Baptisia leucantha ***
White Heath Aster	Aster ericoides ***
White Prairie Clover	Petalostemum candidum***
Whorled Loosestrife	Lysimachia quadrifolia***
Wild Garlic	Allium canadense***

Wild Blue Indigo	Baptisia australis ***
Wild Lupine	Lupinus perennis***
Wild Quinine	Parthenium integrifolium***
Wild Senna	Cassia hebecarpa***
Winged Loosestrife	Lythrum alatum***
Yellow Coneflower	Ratibida pinnata ***
Zigzag goldenrod	Solidago flexicaulis***

December 2002 - Volunteers Help Enhance the Path

By Sue Reindollar
(Photos by Bob Chiesa)

We finally have some sturdy benches in the Glenwood Children's Park. A generous grant from MG&E when the bike path was being constructed provided the materials, and Rich Chiesa, a senior at West High and son of Bob and Carey Chiesa, 2230 Keyes, constructed the three wooden benches. The construction project fulfilled Rich's requirement for Eagle Scout. Two of the benches are placed in the wayside area near the drinking fountain along Glenway and a third bench is located in the playground area. Currently we are working with the Friends of Lake Wingra to explore the possibility of installing an information kiosk located near the drinking fountain.




(Click on an image to view)

Without volunteer help, the benches could never have been built. As with so many of our neighborhood ventures, it has taken the commitment of good people who were willing to contribute some hours from their busy schedules to see a project through to completion. Those people who built the benches (and the same goes for the volunteers who have worked on the Odana prairie garden) were from many neighborhoods. DMNA neighbors helping were: Nils Diller, Pickford; Bill and Brian Kenealy, West Lawn; Todd Peterson, Minakwa; Sue Reindollar; and Rich, Bob, and Carey Chiesa (who provided superb food). Help from other neighborhoods were: Joe Connors, Verona; Harold Crabb, Mt.Horeb; Randy and Matt McEllhofe, Kendall Ave.; Jeff Hickel, Glendale Lane; and William First, Mineau Parkway. Perhaps moms with young children visiting the playground appreciate these volunteers the most. Now they have somewhere to sit besides on the sliding board.

In August, West High faculty and Westmorland resident Don Vincent organized volunteers to pull giant ragweed. Elspeth Mungall, Carol Gosenheimer, Char Thompson, and Sue Reindollar pulled pounds of ragweed around the Children's Park area and north down the Path. Since ragweed is an annual, we hope by pulling it, we set next year's crop back considerably, at least in the limited area where we worked. Control of the invasive species is going to have to be part of a "homeowners consciousness raising" activity. Any railroad corridor is infamous for degraded environments, which spread such nasty contenders for attention as garlic mustard, burdock, ragweed, and Japanese knotweed or Japanese bamboo, into people's backyards and

Lake Wingra if left unchecked. Therefore, in the spring, we'll be organizing the garlic mustard brigade.

Also in the dog days of August, a Gregory St. neighbor Vince (Vito) Gandolph single-handedly attacked the Children's Park's invasive species which had overgrown the Park to the point that visitors could barely see the path for the weeds.

One of the longstanding and more intense volunteer activities has been the planting at the Odana prairie garden and the seeding of the wooded side of the Path. (See the list of plants elsewhere on the web site.) The first years for a planting are crucial, and it will take three years before we see flowers where they were seeded. On Saturday Dec. 7, Dennis Hill, Carol Gosenheimer, and Sue Reindollar are overseeding along the wooded side of the Path with seeds from Audubon's Goose Pond, Kathy and Tom Brock's Black Earth conservancy, and multiple other sources. The seeds had to be picked, then hand-cleaned by rubbing over screens, and then mixed together according to the type of growing conditions we have along the Path. Throughout the summer, we weeded and weeded and weeded. Even though these are prairie plants, which traditionally don't need as much care as do cultivated garden perennials, they still need a good head start against the weeds, which would take over. So we weeded and watered.

Without the guidance and the offering of free plants and seeds from a retired science teacher, Jerry Gunderson of Middleton, there wouldn't be a prairie at Odana. There are many unusual prairie species among the more than 800 plants in the space. Ed Daley of Gregory Street moved more dirt and sand than any bobcat and probably wished he had access to one after we got the second load of sand. Fitchburg resident Dave Barta, a senior at Edgewood High School, earned community service hours by moving loads of mulch and pulling piles of weeds. And Diane Hanson of White Oaks Lane off Schroeder Road helped weed and water on several occasions.

We are rethinking the needs of the Path now that it has celebrated its first full year. Besides the spring cleanup, controlling invasive species, and planting, we will need to focus on traffic issues as a top priority. Any creative suggestions are welcome.

March 2005 Call for Volunteers - Gardening Project along the Bike-Pedestrian Path

The DMNA path committee, in conjunction with Friends of Lake Wingra (FoLW) will be weeding and planting along the bike-pedestrian path this spring and summer. Our goals are to promote the health of Lake Wingra, make the path more attractive, and reduce the volume of invasive plants and weeds along the path. This project marks the start of collaboration between DMNA and FoLW to accomplish a high-priority action included in FoLW's watershed management plans. The plans call for improving management of storm water, controlling invasive species, and restoring native habitat in a community public space. The City of Madison Engineering Department and MG&E are supporting this project.

We chose to start at the intersection of Glenway and the path because land management practices there are of strategic importance to the health of Lake Wingra. Lake Wingra's water quality is severely degraded by nutrient-containing soils and sediments that enter the lake via the City of Madison storm drains. The soils and sediments enter the storm drains via a large erosion gulley originating at the Glenway Golf Course and are deposited in the Ho-Nee-Um Pond and

near the Wingra Boat house (ever notice that the lake is getting more shallow at the boat launch and wondered why?). Our goals are to start in a small area, have fun, and build on our success. If we have a sufficient number of volunteers, we will continue eastward.

We are meeting Saturday, March 19, at 10:00 A.M. at the intersection of Glenway and the path to walk over the site. Our first work day is Saturday, April 16, from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. The dates of future work days will be posted on the calendar on the DMNA website. We welcome volunteers to attend the site preview on March 19th and to stop by to work anytime on the morning of April 16. We are starting as a small group and welcome the help of additional volunteers.

Knowledgeable volunteers will provide guidance on weed and plant identification and gardening practices. You do not need to have any particular knowledge or skills to help.

If you are interested in helping, please contact Robin Ryan by e-mail at lessie@chorus.net or by phone at 236-4145. Or, just show up on March 19th or April 16th. Please contact Robin if you would like to be advised by e-mail of future work dates.