

Ecological Restoration Is . . .

Bringing back the conditions that support healthy nature.



**Invasive Plants + Lack of Fire
= Unhealthy Woodland**



Unhealthy Conditions: Dense shade from invasive trees killed the grasses and flowers that should cover the ground. Birds and butterflies that should live here are gone. Soil now washes into creeks.

Ecological Restoration Begins



Unhealthy Woodland: Volunteers are cutting down the invasive tree European buckthorn.

Sunlight Returns



An Oak Woodland Revealed! The buckthorn stumps will be cut lower and native grass and flower seeds planted to speed the healing.

Healthy Nature Restored

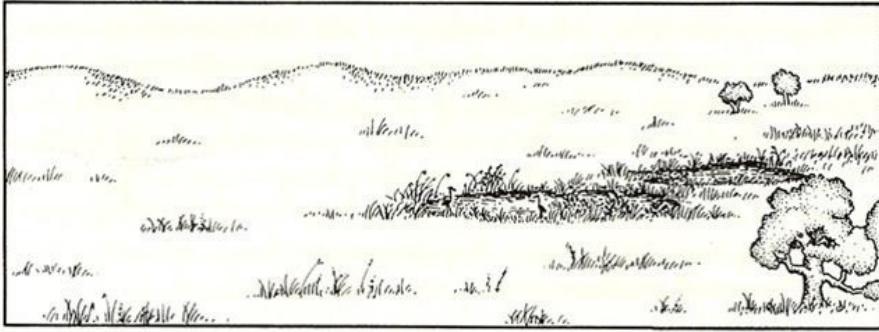


Healthy Woodland: Several years later a healthy woodland now exists. Birds and butterflies have returned. Proper structure will be maintained with regular prescribed fire.

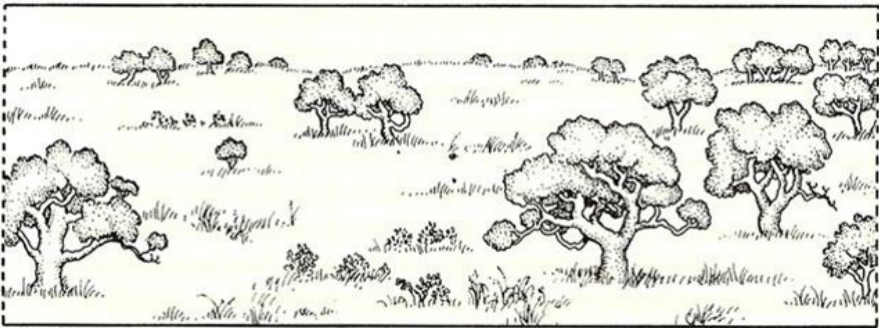
What are the conditions that support healthy nature?

Proper Structure • Prescribed Fire • Removal of Invasive Species

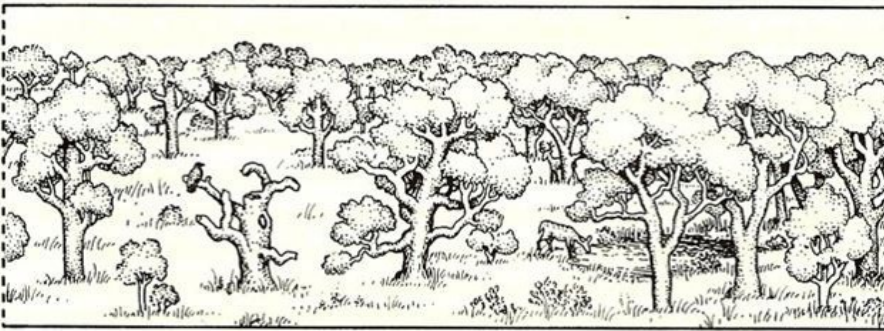
Proper Structure Is ...



Prairie. Full Sunlight. 0 - 10% tree cover.



Savanna. Mostly full sun, some shade. 10% - 50% tree cover.



Woodland. Dappled sunlight. 50% - 80% tree cover.

Proper structure is restored by removing invasive plants, planting appropriate ones, and returning fire. We remove invasive plants by cutting them down, pulling them up, and if necessary applying herbicide to prevent regrowth. We plant the appropriate mix of flowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees to stop soil erosion and provide homes for wildlife.

Why can't we just let nature take its course?

Humans have always managed nature. Ever since the glaciers receded some 13,000 years ago we have been cutting, burning, and otherwise manipulating nature. We chose to stop setting fire to the land and to release invasive plants. We can now choose to let the health of our forest preserves decline or choose to restore the conditions for healthy nature.

Prescribed Fire:

Prescribed fire is the most efficient and cost effective tool to restore healthy nature. It can kill invasive plants, release nutrients into the soil, allow plants to grow sooner in spring-time, and increase seed germination rates.



Crew members on a prescribed fire in Spears Woods.

How to Help:

Join a volunteer restoration group. Get great exercise, meet good people, and do good work. All training and tools are provided.

Contact Us:

info@fotfp.org or (312)356-9990

Common Invasive Plant Species:

1. European Buckthorn
2. Multiflora Rose
3. Asian Honeysuckle
4. Oriental Bittersweet
5. Japanese Barberry
6. Garlic Mustard
7. Teasel
8. Purple Loosestrife
9. Lesser Celandine
10. Common Reed
11. Reed Canary Grass



European buckthorn's distinctive orange color when the bark is cut open.



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