



Harvard Gateway Nature Park



January 2015

Name: Harvard Gateway Nature Park

Location: South of Harvard, IL on Heritage Lane, borders Rt. 14, Rt. 23, Heritage Lane and Marengo Road

Size: 18 acres

Access: 0.3 mile hiking trail. Park along Heritage Lane.

When Acquired: 2011

How Acquired: Purchased with funding from Grand Victoria Foundation and funds raised from the community.

Natural Communities :

- Oak Savanna
- Old Field
- Sedge Meadow
- Creek Corridor

Notable Features:

- One of the only unchannelized sections of Rush Creek in the county
- Close proximity (600 ft downstream) to McHenry County Conservation District site "Rush Creek," making it an important ecological stepping stone for many species
- Creek provides high oxygen levels and a high number and diversity of fish, some of which are listed as "Species of Conservation Concern" in the State Wildlife Action Plan
- Oak savanna contains a multitude of large open grown oaks, most noticeably the largest white oak in the county at 54 inches diameter.
- Presence of young oaks of varying age classes
- Short loop trail, footbridges to cross creek and benches

Notable Species: Meadow anemone, American plum, bulbous cress, slender wood sedge, Culver's root, late horse gentian, pussy toes

Management Plans:

- Conduct ecological surveys
- Control exotic species
- Reintroduce fire
- Post signage

Funding Needed: \$30,000 still needed to establish a permanent endowment to ensure the site can be taken care of forever.

Ecological Significance: Oak savannas today are rare. Less than 1% of the area originally covered by savanna still exists, and most of it is disconnected and degraded. Unchannelized streams are becoming increasingly rare, and are important for reducing erosion, maintaining the watertable and surrounding wetlands, and for providing pool and riffle habitat needed by many of our small fish and aquatic invertebrate species. The acquisition and restoration of this property will ensure habitat for many of our rare flora and fauna.



Harvard Gateway Park
2008 Aerial Photograph

-  Harvard Gateway Park
-  Parcel