



LITTLE RIVER
WETLANDS PROJECT

EDUCATION GARDEN



Request: \$1,000

Location: Arrowhead Prairie preserve on Aboite Road southwest of Fort Wayne, Indiana

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Project: New

Category: Education Garden (also conservation/habitat)

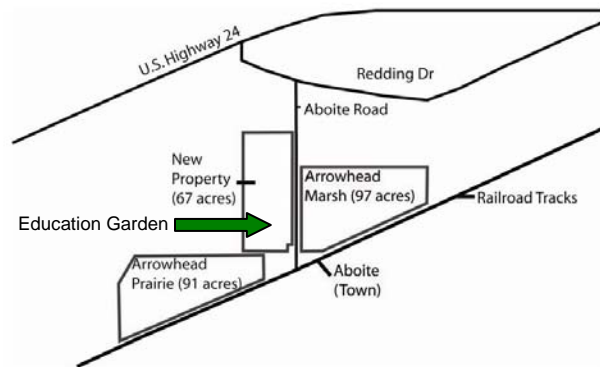
Prior INPAWS Funding: None

Summary

Little River Wetlands Project (LRWP) is seeking funds to complete an education garden on newly acquired property at our Arrowhead preserves. Our education garden will feature native plant species and information on plants of the garden and the adjacent preserves and their relationship to the wildlife - pollinators in particular.

Description

LRWP is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit land trust protecting 1,100 natural acres in the Little River watershed southwest of Fort Wayne. The Arrowhead Education Garden will be designed to sit on a portion of the Arrowhead Prairie addition located between Arrowhead Marsh and Arrowhead Prairie on land currently occupied by buildings. The remainder of the addition, other than a small parking area, will be restored to wetland and prairie habitats.



Once the buildings are removed late this winter, LRWP staff and qualified volunteers will design and plant a garden (approximately one-quarter acre) to showcase and identify native species. The site must be observed in the spring during the wettest part of the season. Once the site is observed to see how wet it gets during the spring season, suitable plants can be chosen. Plants will be matched to the location depending on the sun, soil, and water conditions. Habitats of our Arrowhead preserves fit into four general categories: forested, prairie, sedge meadow, and wet/marshy areas.

Creating an education garden with signs and labels on the Arrowhead preserves will allow visitors to identify many of the species of flora that they will encounter along our trails. The garden will also be a great reference for the guides that lead our programs and hikes. LRWP believes that the best way to encourage people to think about conservation and the preservation of their own local ecosystems is to let them experience their greatness.

Our own mission works seamlessly with the INPAWS mission as we seek to “provide educational opportunities that encourage individuals to be good stewards of wetlands and other natural ecosystems.” Our education garden will work to further the INPAWS mission of promoting the “appreciation, preservation, conservation... of the flora native to Indiana and to educate the public about the values, beauty, diversity and environmental importance of indigenous vegetation.”

Benefits

Each year, LRWP serves over 3,000 people with our free nature programs. We believe the new education garden will benefit all who visit our Arrowhead Prairie addition, including those involved in the following planned and unplanned activities:

1. Children’s field trips (200+ kids per year)
A number of children-centered events are scheduled each year. LRWP sees the value in education and exposure to nature at a young age.
2. Scheduled hikes and programs (2,700 + adults and children per year)
Our yearly butterfly hike at Arrowhead Prairie is one of our most successful planned hiking events. Indiana’s beautiful butterflies rely on the native flora to complete their lifecycle.
3. General public/unscheduled hikes (estimated 200+ visitors per year)
Visitors to our Arrowhead preserves can utilize the education garden much in the same way as our guides: identifying plants before or after their hike around the property, understanding better the ways plants and wildlife interact, and learning much more at their visit as a result.

Organizations

The Nature Conservancy of Indiana and the federal Wetlands Reserve Program are involved in the purchase and restoration of the new Arrowhead Prairie addition, but not directly with the educational garden.

Resources

Our Arrowhead addition was purchased on December 7, 2009. Because the property is so new to us, LRWP does not currently have other funding or resources for this project.

We have a committed interest from two members of the Indiana Master Gardeners and Indiana Master Naturalists that also volunteer with us. Our volunteers hope to recruit more members of these organizations to work with us on this project. Among our volunteers, we also have a native plant expert from a local nursery and an Environmental Designer from a local environmental firm. Both individuals will be involved in the Education Garden project.

Anticipated Schedule

PHASE	RESOURCES	ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE
1. Clear site of buildings and debris	hired demolition and volunteer clean-up	late winter, 2010
2. Design educational garden	native plant expert, Environmental Designer	spring, 2010
3. Plant and tend garden	volunteers, staff	late spring, 2010
4. Design signs	Naturalists, LRWP volunteers	spring and summer, 2010
5. Erect signs	LRWP volunteers	summer or fall 2010
6. Involve the public (hikes, events)	LRWP staff and volunteers for scheduled events	summer, 2010
7. Complete garden		fall, 2010

Species List

As stated in the description and resources sections, plants will be selected based on the habitat available. Below is a list of species currently growing at the other Arrowhead properties. Species for the garden will be selected mainly from this list.

SPECIES LIST			
Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
Yellow Giant Hissop	<i>Agastache nepetoides</i>	Foxglove Beardtongue	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>
Leadplant	<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	Purple Prairie Clover	<i>Petalostemum purpureum</i>
Big Bluestem Grass	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Tall Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla arguta</i>
Common Milkweed	<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Gray-headed Coneflower	<i>Ratibida pinnata</i>
New England Aster	<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>
Frank's Sedge	<i>Carex frankii</i>	Little Bluestem Grass	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>
Porcupine Sedge	<i>Carex hystericina</i>	Wild Senna	<i>Senna hebecarpa</i>
Partridge Pea	<i>Chamaechrista fasciculata</i>	Rosinweed	<i>Silphium integrifolium</i>
Canada Wild Rye	<i>Elymus Canadensis</i>	Cup Plant	<i>Silphium perfoliatum</i>
Rattlesnake Master	<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i>	Gray goldenrod	<i>Solidago nemoralis</i>
False Sunflower	<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>	Indian Grass	<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>
Round-headed Bush Clover	<i>Lespedeza capitata</i>	Giant Ironweed	<i>Vernonia gigantea</i>

Conclusion

Little River Wetlands Project is excited about the opportunity to partner with INPAWS. Our volunteers are ready and motivated to begin work on this project. They see an Education Garden not only as a benefit to LRWP, but to the residents of the surrounding communities – their friends and families – with whom they wish to share the beauty of Indiana's natural landscapes and ecosystems.

Budget

This is a budget of estimated costs for the LRWP Education Garden project.

BUDGET SHEET		
Labor	volunteers	(\$20/hr x 300hrs = \$6,000)
	staff oversight	(\$20/hr x 20hrs = \$400)
Material	borders/paths (mulch)	\$250
	seeds, plugs (see species list)	\$500
	interpretive signs	\$250
Requested from INPAWS		\$1000
Raised Funds*		\$0
TOTAL including volunteer/staff time		\$7,400

* While LRWP has not raised additional funds for the project, it will contribute the land for the site, equipment needed for planting, staff time, and volunteer time.