



# What's Working:

## Conservation Project Planning & Promotion

February 2015

### Education

#### 2013-2014 Information

- Adult education classes have been effective to teach native plant identification and growth. Three classes have been developed aimed at teaching participants how to:
  - 1) Identify native plants and extract/collect their seeds (Fall Class)
  - 2) Construct and use a grow light stand from 3 florescent light fixtures that will accommodate four 10 x 20 standard planting trays and stratify native seeds (Winter Class)
  - 3) Sow, germinate, and transplant native plant seedlings grown under the light system that participants constructed (Spring Class).

Each of the classes are 2 hours in length, with significant prep time for the second one (I cut and pre-drilled all of the blanks for the light stand) The facilitator should have a good grasp on all of these steps, none of which are difficult, but they need to be familiar in order to teach and troubleshoot the processes. A similar thing could be facilitated in classrooms, with a project that wraps the entire year (Dan Schutte, Lake SWCD).

- Scott SWCD has held workshops that led to significant public participation in prairie restoration projects. The SWCD advertised through newspapers, flyers posted at city halls, grocery stores, other public places, and on the web. The majority of those that attended planned to convert their lawn to native flowers and grasses, while some are converting crop land or pasture to native vegetation. They were excited about planting native plants and providing pollinator habitat but didn't know where to start. A beekeeper presented for about ten minutes on bees - A root display supplied by Blue Thumb was used to show the different lengths of roots - during the presentation two volunteers come up and compare the 3 inch long turf grass root to the 15 ft. long lead plant root. A landowner also presented on why where, how etc. they planted prairie. The audience really enjoyed that part of the workshop. Sponsors from local seed suppliers and consultants, a bee farm, some townships and other organizations also participated; this helped cover refreshments and other expenses. The sponsors also donated door prizes (honey, plant ID books, etc.) and names were drawn at the end for the prizes. The workshops lasted about 1hr 15min and were a huge success; the majority of the participants wanted to go ahead with projects (Alyssa Alness, Scott SWCD).

#### 2008-2012 Information

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- We have been effective in bringing local school groups into our restoration projects by: (1) having an education person on staff, (2) helping teachers tailor lessons around the restoration, (3) mixing classroom lectures and field trips, and (4) having excellent teachers to work with (Bill Bartodziej, Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District).
  - Native vegetation is not easy to establish on highly disturbed sites. Education is vital in dealing with the public's perception of what the finished product will look like and the length of time it will take to get there. It has become apparent that ongoing maintenance will be required during the period of establishment which will take several years (Becker SWCD).