

Site: Wetlands and Environs
Location: Apprx 158th & 80th Ave (East Side) Adjoining Golfview Natural Area
(North of Walgreens and 3 Lots to the East), Village of Orland Park
Owner: 159-80 LLC (Midwest Property Group Ltd)
PIN: Cook County IL 27-13-300-013-0000
Size: 4.3 ac (appx)
Field Date: 8 August 2017 (Quick Look)
Ecologist: Louis Mule, VOP Open Lands and Tallgrass Associates

Description:

The parcel is a remnant of a naturally occurring marsh wetlands and shrub swamp in the Tinley Creek watershed. Elements of wet and wet mesic prairie also occur at the site. The parcel is adjacent to and hydrologically part of the adjoining larger Golf View East natural area (about 12 ac) which reportedly has a conservation easement. The plant communities contain both native and invasive species typical of wetland communities.

Method:

A quick look field tour was conducted to determine if the floristic quality of the site warranted further study and if the site might be suitable as a candidate for donation to the Orland Park Open Lands program. The site was toured for a very quick assessment of natural area quality, species presence and structure, land use disturbance and hydrological sources. Observed known species were tallied in the latest Chicago Region Floristic Quality Assessment Calculator published by the USACE Chicago Region (2017). Typical photos were also taken. Soils were not investigated.

Observations:

The landscape structure consists of two ponds, partially connected, surrounded by shrubs and swamp trees. The site was surprisingly more diverse than the adjoining wetland parcels and warrants further study, especially of grasses, sedges and submerged wetland species, which were not studied. Especially noteworthy for wetland species found in Orland Township were Cardinal Flower, Ditch Stonecrop, Common Buttonbush, Primrose Willow, and Monkey Flower. Prairie elements included Big Bluestem, Rattlesnake Master, Virginia Mountain-Mint, and Bee-Balm. Woody species were more typical of a disturbed swamp with Box Elder, Cottonwoods, and Black Willow. Zonal populations of other wetland species were noted but not identified.

Comments on Open Lands Potential:

1. Within the larger adjoining wetland swamp and marsh, this parcel appears to be more diverse in community structure. However, additional field seasonal study is needed to better assess its ecological diversity and function.
2. The native FQI of 18.09 is relatively high considering only 33 species were identified and virtually none of the grasses, sedges and aquatic species that were noted but not included. A site with a FQI of 20 or higher is generally viewed as a preservation candidate. Additional floristic study would surely raise the FQI.
3. The presence of prairie species on the mesic slopes of the pond area suggests it is a small remnant of original prairie in the area.
4. The site could serve as a model for restoration and native seed source for more depauperate wetlands in other areas of the Village.
5. If not preserved or protected from further disturbance, the parcel would probably continue to degrade and diminish the adjoining natural area as well.
6. Other than the FPDCC land, there is not very much natural area preserved in east Orland. If preserved, this site would add representation to this section of the Village.

Comments on Management/Restoration:

1. The parcel receives effluent from the adjoining business detention ponds on 159th St. These detentions need to adhere to a good detention maintenance program and function to avoid adversely harming the existing wetlands here.
2. The parcel has no public access points. Agreements with adjoining landowners may be needed to access and maintain the parcel.
3. One or two years of burns and stewardship at this site should enhance the natural quality of the plant communities, reduce invasives and expand native species.
4. Invasive reed canary grass and Phragmites are present and will probably expand without prescribed burns and stewardship. The remnants of the native prairie and wetland communities will be negatively affected if such tasks are not conducted after any acquisition.
5. Coordination with the Golf View East Homeowners Association may be needed if any stewardships or burns are conducted as intrusion into their natural areas may occur.
6. In view of the diversity there already identified and the landscape structure, we can probably expect a positive plant community response to M&R activities.

The Plant Inventory Report (FQI) is attached.

Representative Photos:



One of the Ponds at 80th Ave Parcel (West End)



Eastern End of Pond



Cardinal Flower



Button Bush



Monkey Flower