

# How Can I Help?

Volunteers are the backbone of habitat restoration efforts in Illinois.

Join one or two of the community groups on the back of this brochure for a fun day in the woods and prairies.

Make new friends and build community around conservation and restoration work.

Learn about plants, wildlife, and ecology, and apply your new-found knowledge to help nature.

# Who do I contact to get started?

Most of the seed gathering, brush cutting, and rare species monitoring are done by small groups led by trained volunteer leaders. Anyone can join in the fun and make a huge impact - helping nature, with their own hands. These community groups support volunteers like you. Contact us for schedules and opportunities.

[Habitat2030.org](http://Habitat2030.org)

[NorthBranchRestoration.org](http://NorthBranchRestoration.org)

[Restoringnature.org](http://Restoringnature.org)

# Who supports all this?

All restoration plans are approved by Forest Preserve staff.

Expert guidance is provided by:  
Cook County Forest Preserves  
Friends of the Forest Preserves  
Friends of the Chicago River  
Audubon – Chicago Region  
The Shedd Aquarium  
The Field Museum  
The Nature Conservancy

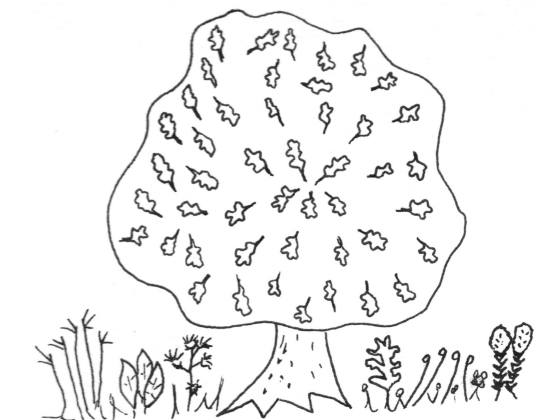
# What is Habitat Restoration?

Saving nature from this...



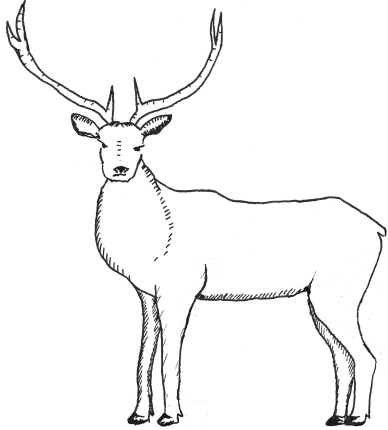
INVASIVE PLANT THICKET

... and returning it to this.

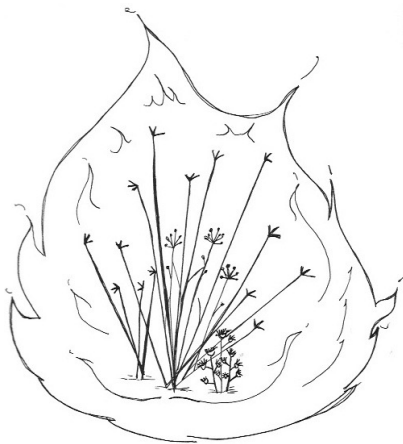


BEAUTIFUL NATURAL HABITAT

For millions of years, glaciers came and went, and rich nature evolved.



Elk and mountain lions roamed the woods and prairies, and a vast array of animal and plant species evolved in unique ecosystems.



Humans are part of nature.

For thousands of years, native people burned grasslands, and lightning strikes caught dry vegetation on fire throughout the entire midsection of what is now the United States.

The loss of woodlands and prairies to development, and the absence of natural fire, allowed invasive plants to take over precious habitat.

Buckthorn, garlic mustard, and Japanese barberry are some of the invasive plants that gobble up land, choke out diverse natural plants, and kill ecosystems.

Precious remnants of pristine wilderness remain.

Although most forest preserves today have lost their quality and consist of invasive brush and weeds, a few spots are filled with beauty and wildlife. Volunteers protect them.

Habitat restoration puts things right and saves ecosystems from disappearing.

For 35 years, volunteers have proven that habitat restoration works. We cut out invasive plants that block the sun. We carefully collect precious seeds by hand where there's more than enough to share. We spread seeds to their new homes where they will thrive and create special habitats for wildlife. We use the most up to date scientific methods to ensure we are helping nature.

Plants and animals thrive where we restore habitat.

Somme Prairie Grove in Northbrook is one example of a place that was saved by volunteers from invasive plants, litter, and pollution. It was almost lost, but now it is a beautiful home again for wildlife and plants - one of the many success stories of habitat restoration efforts.