

Legacy Prairie Update

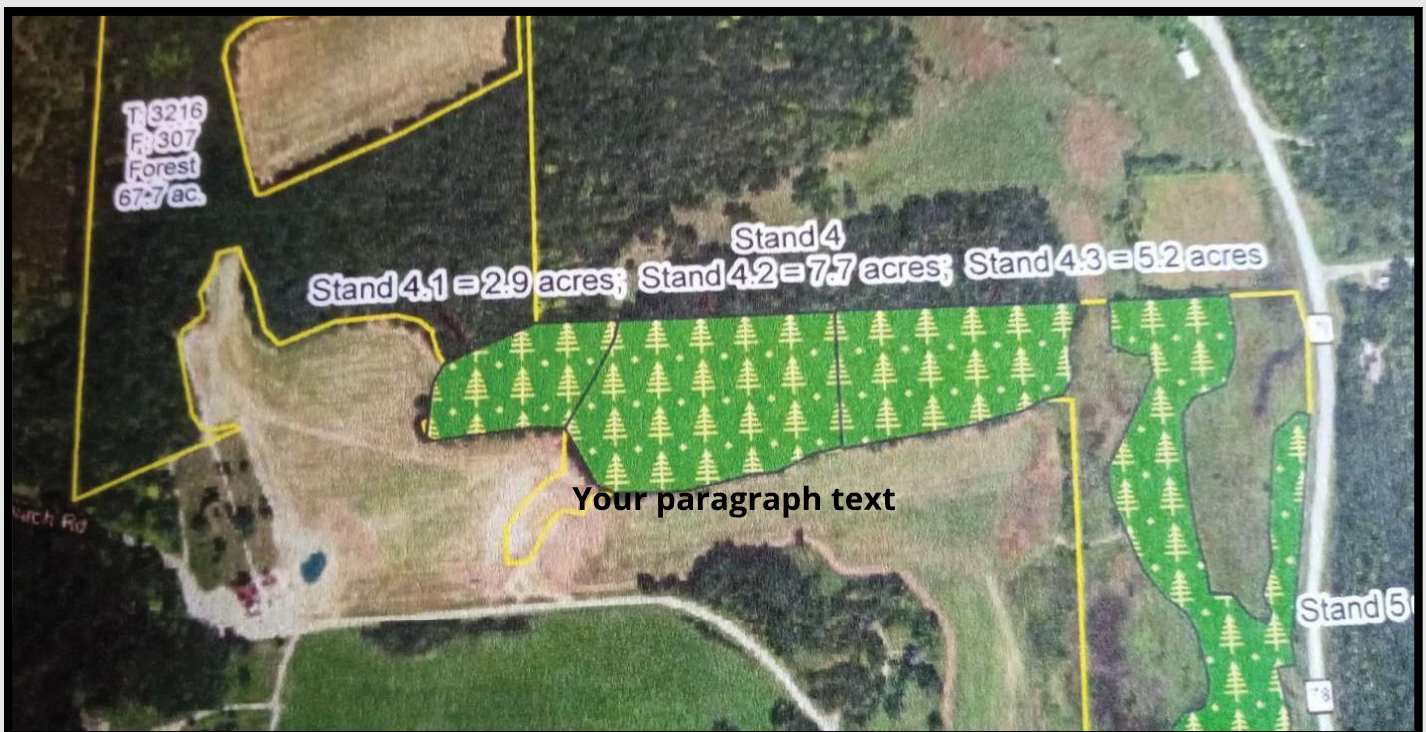
February 2025
By Peter Antonie

The Legacy Fund Committee and other interested parties have continued their work to further develop the Legacy Prairie and Woodland and explore options to enhance what has already been accomplished

Last spring, we were awarded a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) grant that includes funding to do restoration work in the Wetland area on either side of Vermont Creek (Stand 5) to manage invasive species, cutting some trees and providing better access to Vermont Creek for fishing. (The picture, right, is an aerial view of the property with demarcation of the area along Vermont Creek – designated “stand 5” – that the NRCS grant applies to.)

In addition, the NRCS grant applies to managing invasive species, clearing trees to encourage Oak growth and allow for restoring Oak-Savannah in the woodland area designated as stand 4, divided into three segments to be worked on in succeeding years.

Initial clearing work in the wetland (Stand 5) and woodland segments (Stands 4.1 & 4.2) started early this winter and will be completed this spring.



Creek Clearing



We hired EC3 Environmental Consulting Group to use their forestry mower and some chainsaw work to do the clearing work along the creek.

Before



Future Plans for the Creek Cleared Area:

We will manage the cleared area to discourage regrowth of invasive brush and trees. In addition, members of the Legacy Fund Committee will be meeting with representatives from Dane County and the DNR in mid-March to discuss best practices for what to plant in the cleared area (e.g., prairie grasses, shade trees, etc.), stream habitat improvement for the trout and to maintaining the water quality in the creek.

Here are before and after pictures of that clearing work.

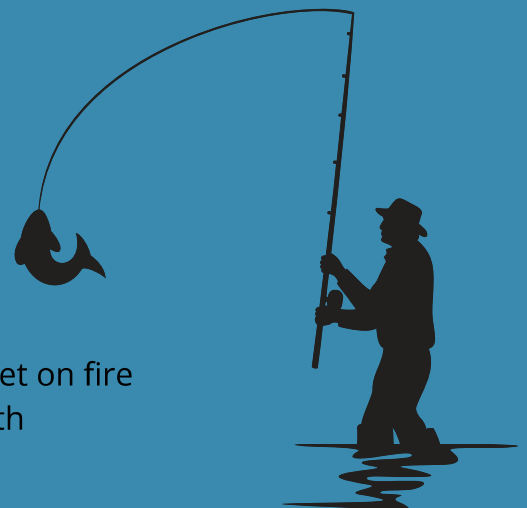
After



A burn pile of cleared brush and trees from the area between the creek and highway 78.



One of the burn piles set on fire on February 17th



Woodland Clearing

EC3 also used their forestry mower and chainsaws to clear unwanted brush and trees in two of the three sections of woodland designated as stand 4 on the aerial view map.



Here are a few pictures of the area that has been cleared showing the extent of remnant Oak trees that indicate the area was once an extensive Oak-Savannah.



Future Plans for the Woodland Cleared Area

The NRCS grant funding also applies to 3 years of additional work we'll have EC3 do to manage the regrowth of invasive brush and trees and plant a cover crop to help hold the soil while a planted short grass prairie takes over.



Legacy Future...

We Need Your Development Ideas: Everything reported on in this update is the result of careful planning by the Legacy Fund Committee and ideas from members and staff. As we look ahead to 2025 and beyond, we're interested in what you'd like to see as additions or changes to what has already been done. If you have something you'd like to see happen, please contact Greg Herrling.

Please:

Come on out anytime to take a hike, have a quiet moment on the patio, use the play structure, or drive up the Cemetery extension road to take in the view.

Coming Up

There's always something happening: The South Central Synod's Caring for God's Creation committee will be holding a "Wild Church" event at Vermont Church on Saturday, May 10th from 10 am to 1 pm. This is an opportunity for folks from all over the synod to come to Vermont and see what we've done, take a hike, meditate along the trails, and marvel at God's creation.

Future updates and questions:

We know there is a great deal of interest in these projects and we will continue to provide regular updates. If you have questions or ideas you'd like to pass on to the Legacy Fund Committee (LFC), please feel free to email the church or speak with one of the LFC members: Greg Herrling, Wade Winchip, Larry Ziemer, Leonard Schaub, Karsten Haugen, Jim Herrling or Gary Olsen.

Become a member of the Legacy Fund. Members of the Legacy Fund are united by a desire to preserve our beautiful Church, Cemetery, and adjoining land. Vermont Lutheran Church owns and maintains a cemetery, historic church building, Gathering Place, and 115 acres of adjacent land with a hilltop viewscape. Christian stewardship involves faithfully managing all the gifts God has given us, including accumulated, inherited, and appreciated resources. Therefore, we created the Legacy Fund to encourage, receive, and administer these gifts. Our goal is to generate and maintain a Legacy Fund of \$1 Million dollars or more. Through receipt of bequests, grants and/or gifts, contributions to the Legacy Fund and investment growth will serve three very important purposes now and into the future Expand the cemetery and develop and maintain the adjacent land in a manner that maximizes its natural beauty and preserves its ecological importance; and, Provide funds to pay property taxes on the portion of the adjacent land subject to taxes; and, Provide funds for future maintenance of the cemetery and building and grounds needs of the Church. Any legacy member whose contribution totals \$1,000 or more will be recognized with a brass plate on a prominently displayed plaque. Annual meeting reports will include all the names of those individuals who contributed any amount that year.