

Legacy Prairie & Woodland Update: August 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.

Our prairie areas were planted in November 2022, so this is their third summer and are in beautiful bloom, right now. Seen from afar, they look like a sea of yellow.



There are lots of Yellow Coneflowers and Prairie Dock (above)

However, there is also a presence of purple, as demonstrated by the Bergamot (Bee Balm) interspersed among the Coneflowers and Prairie Dock, as shown below.



And every once in awhile a tall white majestic Rattlesnake Master makes its presence known.



A lot has happened in the wetland area along Vermont Creek since last-winter's forestry mowing allowed easy access to the creek. In April, representatives from Dane County, the DNR and BECWA (Black Earth Creek Watershed Association) met with our Legacy Fund Committee to walk the creek and start the process of creating a habitat improvement plan.





In May, a second meeting was held to discuss some engineering ideas and alternatives.



Here's a picture of taking a cross-section sample of the creek. This was done in several places along the creek to assist the engineers in designing where on the creek and what kind of Trout habitat improvement techniques would have the best effect.



Then, the DNR came back on July 1st to perform electroshocking sampling of a 430-foot portion of the creek. This technique momentarily stuns the fish so that they can be collected and quickly studied before releasing them back into the creek.



Within the 430-foot section of the creek that they sampled, 77 Brown Trout were collected; the largest of which was 14 inches.



With all the turns and bends in the creek, we have almost half of a mile of Vermont Creek flowing through the wetland. By sampling just 430 feet of the creek, the DNR sampled less than 20% of that half of a mile of creek. So, there are likely several hundred Trout in our section of Vermont Creek!

These meetings offered useful input for the Legacy Fund Committee when it comes time to decide what course to take with the upcoming habitat improvement plan from the Dane County engineers.

We Need Your Development Ideas: Everything reported 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.

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, Peter Antonie, Larry Ziemer, Leonard Schaub, Karsten Haugen, Jim Herrling or Gary Olsen