

Libertyville High School

2023 Project Report

The Project:

Led by members of the ECOS club, students at Libertyville High School researched, planned, and prepared a 300-foot native plant buffer strip between the school and Butler Lake. Environmental student groups plan to transplant the native plants this coming fall. Until then, the plants are growing from seed indoors in classrooms, as well as outdoors in a courtyard. Students have also removed invasive species from the shoreline to prepare the soil for native plants to be planted. The students researched the environmental issues, met with subject matter experts, decided on the focus of the project, presented the project proposal for approval, created a website, and propagated the native plants.

Project Focus: Habitat Restoration & Biodiversity

Location: Libertyville, IL

Staff Involved: 14

Students: 150



We believe that by inviting all of the various stakeholders to learn with us, we ended up with a better understanding of the land we are working on and the diverse needs of the people who use the land, and that we avoided potential problems by asking for input and ideas.



The Process:

First the school identified environmental issues. Extreme rainfall in the summer of 2017 led to significant flooding of the Des Plaines River. The school also identified several invasive plants along the lakeshore. To better understand the flooding issues, faculty and students studied the 2015 Butler Lake Report for background information about the health of the lake. They learned that the “lake” is actually classified as a wetland and it is also considered temporary. Students researched options to help deal with the flooding, erosion, and invasive species issues, and consulted separately with seven different subject matter experts who came to the school to explain the issues and possible solutions. Students then partnered with ILM-Environments to clear brush and invasive species in order to make space for native species. Meanwhile, students grew those native species by refrigerating and then germinating them. Until late spring they will remain indoors.



The Outcomes:

For the remaining school year, the students will continue to care for the potted plants, and they will plant the shoreline in the fall of the upcoming school year. Students involved in this project are planning to invite students and staff to help them plant and spread the sense of ownership and pride in the new shoreline, and to educate as many people as possible about the importance of native plants. They also hope to install an informational sign on the shoreline to continue to teach the public about native plants and to encourage landowners to incorporate native plants into their landscape design.

