



Fermilab Natural Areas Stewardship Program

Program Overview

The Fermilab Natural Areas (FNA) stewardship program encourages volunteers to actively participate in the long-term management of Fermilab's natural areas. This program will accept volunteers at all levels of experience and training, but requires high levels of enthusiasm and commitment. This program is a formal, cooperative venture with Fermilab to provide assistance in ecological land management across the site. Like similar programs at other natural areas, e.g., Forest Preserves, State Parks, etc., FNA stewards take responsibility for a specific natural area and assist in the development and implementation of management measures in order to attain real goals. Stewards will work with FNA and Fermilab land management experts to assist in ecological activities such as plant and animal surveys, invasive species control, native seed collection, and educational tours. FNA volunteer stewards will be valuable parts of Fermilab's ongoing land management program.

Program Details

Volunteers may choose to become a full steward, or co-steward based on their experience, ecological knowledge, and devotion to working toward management goals. Upon acceptance into the program, stewards will be registered with the Fermilab "Users Office", issued a Visitor ID Badge, and given orientation and safety training¹. Participants will then go through at least one formal training session at Site 37 (Roads & Grounds) to go over Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Policies and Procedures, Biological and Outdoor Hazards, and equipment information. Stewards will work with the Natural Resource Specialist to choose a specific area(s) of the site depending on his or her interests and together they will determine stewardship goals for the area(s). Volunteers have the option to shadow staff or other stewards to gain experience. Stewards will be able to collaborate with Roads & Grounds on larger projects such as tree removal, intensive brush clearing, or noxious weed infestations. Questions or requests for help should be brought to the attention of the Natural Resource Specialist or Roads & Grounds Managers.

Stewards will headquarter at the Fermilab Roads & Grounds shop (Site 37). Stewards can coordinate and supervise other volunteers in the field to accomplish their goals. Stewards should expect to report to the Fermilab [Ecological Land Management \(ELM\)](#) committee periodically regarding the status of their areas. This committee meets the first Thursday of the month at noon in Wilson Hall. Ask staff for details. When working in the field, the safety of the steward and other volunteers is absolutely of the highest importance.

Volunteer stewards have access to the site every day from sunrise to sunset and are expected to use their own vehicles, unless working directly with a Fermilab employee.

¹ Fermilab employees who wish to enter the stewardship program are not required to register with the User's Office. Activities undertaken by employee stewards must take place outside regular working hours, or be approved by their supervisor.



Stewards will use a variety of hand tools (loppers, hand saws, clippers, etc.), which are stored in the Village Greenhouse (Seed Processing Facility). Access to this building and work cabinets will be by combination lock. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as ear plugs, gloves, safety glasses, sun screen will be provided there. FNA stewards are not typically permitted to use power tools unless supervised by Fermilab Roads & Grounds personnel. Roads & Grounds staff will periodically host herbicide training and safety workshops for stewards, consistent with Illinois law as need demands. This will allow the steward to apply herbicide to invasive species with licensed staff providing the appropriate products and determining the correct application rates.

A successful steward in this program must have a willingness to commit to regular work and be passionate about protecting our native habitats. The dedicated actions of the FNA stewardship program will complement the large-scale operations of the Fermilab Roads& Grounds Department to benefit both people and nature at Fermilab for years to come.