Avian Odessey

Located in the Horst & Anna Wagener WEAR Garden, WEAR is transforming this lot into a native oasis for Butterflies, Birds and other Pollinators.

Next stage of the transformation to complete the beautification is the installation of mural art created by Chicago artist Cheri Charlton in collaboration with the Illinois Audubon Society.

Since 1897 ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Creating a biodiverse Oasis focusing on Keystone Plants

Keystone native plants are integral to maintaining local biodiversity by providing critical food and shelter for many animal species with the large number of other species it supports. Keystone native plants support the local food web by being host plants for moth and butterfly larvae, a key food source for birds, by providing pollen and nectar for pollinators, or by producing fruit for birds and insects, or all three! Without keystone plants, biodiversity declines dramatically.

Chinkapin Oak Tree
At the top of the food chain, Oak Trees are the most important Keystone plant. The Chinkapin is one of the most common Oaks in IL and is a host to over 450 species of caterpillars.

Pussy Willow
Willows are some the earliest blooming native trees and shrubs. They provide critical pollen and nectar for early emerging spring bees. They are host nearly 300 species of moths and butterflies.

Wild Black Cherry Tree
Besides being beautiful in Spring, they are an important food source for birds and early season pollinators and is a host for nearly 350 species of moths and butterflies.

Prairie Willow
Willows are some the earliest blooming native trees and shrubs. They provide critical pollen and nectar for early emerging spring bees. They are host nearly 300 species of moths and butterflies.

Shrubby St John's Wort

A host plant for several species of butterflies and moths. The caterpillars of the gray hairstreak butterfly and several species of moths.

Elderberry

Covered with large umbels of clustered white flowers in summer, followed by a profusion of dark purple berry clusters. A host plant for 30 spies of moths and butterflies, its fruit is prized by birds

Coralberry

While not considered a keystone plant, it is a host to 20 species of moths & butterflies it provides winter forage for birds as they prize its fruit.

Gooseberry Shrub

Host plant for the Comma Butterfly and several other species including native bees that migrate from south America. Its fruit is also prized by birds

Chokecherry Shrub

Host plant for Giant Swallowtail and others, its late summer fruit also provides in important food for birds

Black Raspberry

A host plant for over 150 native moth/butterfly caterpillars, their flowers are an essential nectar/pollen source in the spring and its fruit is forged for by native birds.


Pussy Willow
Prairie Willow
Black Cherry Tree
Chinkapin Oak Tree
Coralberry
Black Raspberry
Elderberry
Gooseberry
St. John's Wart
Choke Cherry
Prairie Dropseed Grasses & Ohio Spiderwort
STOP

NW Corner Rosehill & Ravenswood – how the oasis was created

Located adjacent to the Horst & Anna Wagener WEAR Garden, an abandoned property for over 20 years, WEAR will transform this 3,000 sq ft lot into a native oasis for Butterflies, Birds and other Pollinators.

Possibility Place Nursery

Designed by a Chicagoland leader in all native plants

Chinkapin oak

Chokecherry

Blackberry
Along wall

St Johns Wart

Prairie dropseed grasses with mixed perennial flowers

Low ground cover plants in front to not block views

Wild Black Cheery Tree with Gooseberry around it

Elderberry

STEP #1

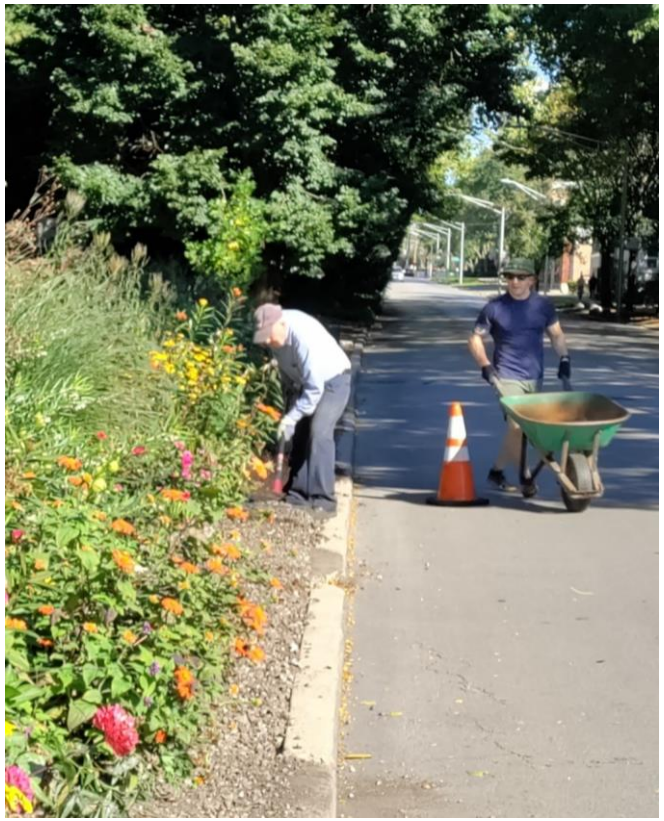
Solarizing existing grass to kill off it and weeds to prep for Fall planting.

STEP #2

Removal of tress either dead or in poor condition. Pleaded with City for help but was questionable as its not City property. But our Alderperson Vasquez came through and the City got it done.

STEP #3

The trees up above on what use to the platforms from the former Rosehil Railroad Station needed to be thinned out. There was no City help with these trees. The team did it ourselves and manually hauled off the debris to the wooded area about 150 yards to the north.



STEP #4

The heavy lifting, clearing out some of the gravel pit and hauling it out spreading it across the front of the WEAR Garden along the curb.

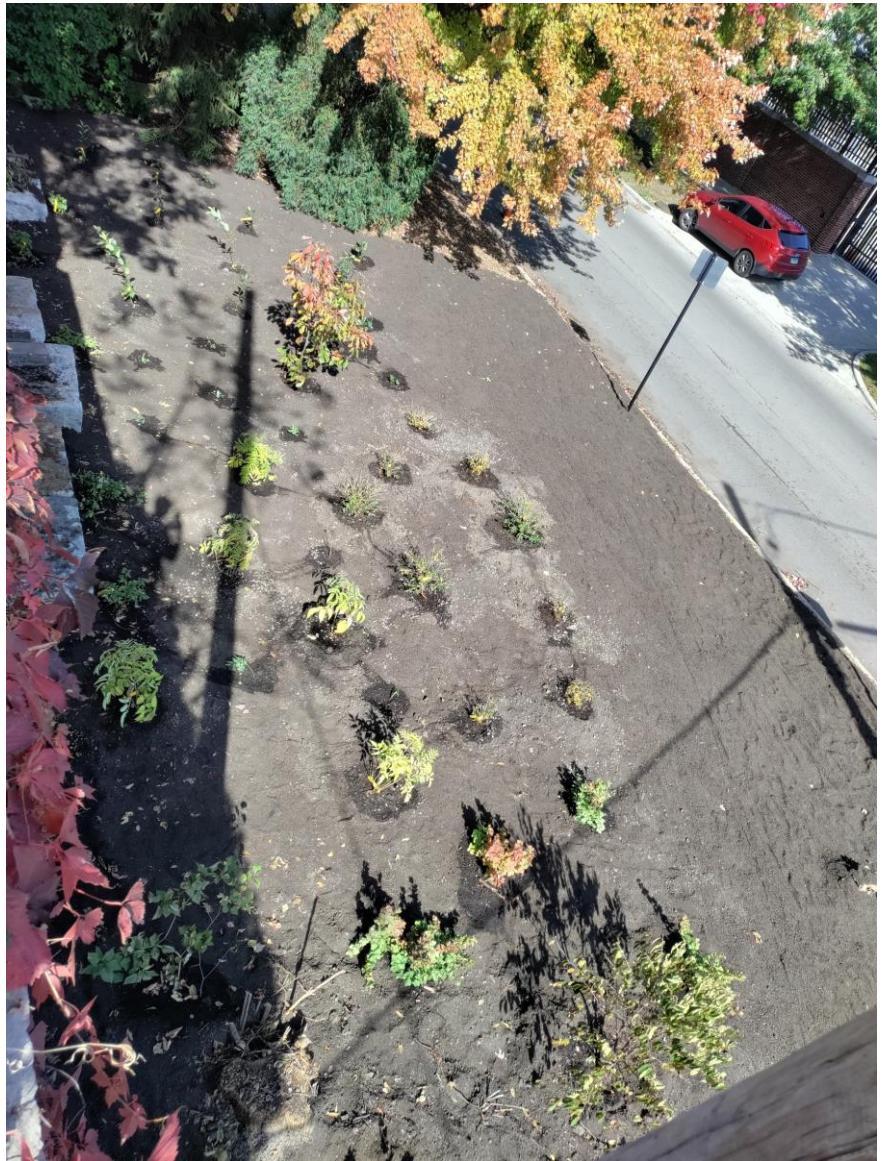
STEP #5

One load of dirt to fill in the gravel pit opened
Two truck loads of compost to spread over the entire lot.

STEP #7

The fun stuff, planting!

With the two new trees, there were over 40 potted native shrubs and dozens of other smaller plantings.



Some may think this was the easy part, it was not. Because the ground is so hard and there's still considerable stone in spite of what we dug out, pickaxes had to be used to dig many of the holes to transplant the shrubs and trees. We also encountered many large stone blocks, remnants of the cell phone tower that existed here 30 years ago.

STEP #8

The City Dept. of Forestry brough over a truck load of woodchip to spread across the lot. Again, a lot of heavy lifting, regretfully we didn't get photos of that work in progress.

STEP #9

Watering the new plantings every few days until the first hard frost sets in.

STEP #10 – Coming in Spring 2023

The area between the road and the pathway will be planted with native Northern Dropseed Grasses mixed with Ohio Spiderwort.








With deep gratitude, WEAR thanks all those involved

- Suzanne Huffman – long term WEAR neighbor who generously funded the project

- 40th Ward Office:
  - Alderperson Andre Vasquez
  - Daniel Storm
  - Morgan Madderom and the Environmental Board
  - Bill Horenadel
  - Dept. of Forestry

- WEAR Residents:
  - Horst Wagener – Garden Founder and Mentor
  - Scott Fink
  - Charlie Parker
  - Barry Love
  - Ben Sanda
  - David Horak
  - Ben Franklin
  - Andy Dane

- Other neighbor volunteers who were incredibly helpful:
  - Paul Naylor & Maria Akchurin – from Bowmanville
  - Steve – from West Ridge