



TICT OFF

Tippecanoe Invasive Cooperative Taskforce Newsletter
December 2021

Improving Habitat on a Small Private Parcel - Insight from a Local Landowner

By: Mark Peterson

In 2010 I had the opportunity to purchase approximately 6.5 acres of mostly wooded land adjacent to my existing 2.25 acre homesite. The parcel had once been carefully tended by the previous owner but became neglected as his health deteriorated. By the time my wife and I acquired it, the piece had become completely overtaken by Asian honeysuckle and autumn olive. While the woods were dominated by walnut, cherry, osage orange and buckeye, the understory was so thick with invasive brush that it was nearly impossible to traverse the property. Few native, herbaceous plants were to be found and while the deer had been able to make a few trails, it seemed that the diversity of wildlife was limited.



The ultimate goal: a more open and inviting wooded space

I began my work by cutting a path with a chainsaw, as many of the individual honeysuckle were as much as 3-6 inches in diameter. Over the years my toolbox expanded. Once the larger plants were taken out and paths established, it was easier to use a backpack sprayer and apply foliar treatments in the fall. A sturdy pair of loppers allowed me to cut up to 2 inch stems. Whether cutting with a chainsaw or loppers, treatment of the cut stumps with herbicide is essential. Otherwise the plants will soon resprout and turn into a mass of stems that can be even more difficult to deal with. Sometimes in the winter I will use the "hack and squirt" method, opening a couple of areas on the stem with a hatchet or machete and then applying a herbicide mixture. This approach can be a little speedier than cutting the plants completely but also leaves the "skeletons" which can sometimes interfere with getting the understory to really open up. Finally, I will use a small tractor and bush hog mower to beat back re-infestations after I've opened an area up.

My primary herbicide of choice is a premix of triclopyr and 2,4-D, sold under the name of "Crossbow" (other brands are available). For cut stump applications I use 4% Crossbow combined with 10% glyphosate mixed with diesel fuel. I dribble this on freshly cut stumps with a gallon jug that has a rubber tube inserted through the cap. In the case of foliar sprays I will often leave out the glyphosate to reduce the impact on non-target plants and reduce the rate of Crossbow to about 2-3 gallons per acre applied in 30 gallons of water per acre. Always read the product labels carefully and avoid contacting desirable plants as much as possible. Of course, control can be achieved without the use of herbicides, but be prepared for significantly more labor and more frequent resprouting. *(Disclaimer: There are multiple herbicide options available for invasive plant control, always follow the label to ensure the safest and most effective application.)*



Turkeys foraging in a cleared area. Notice the dense infestation of honeysuckle in the background.

Continued from Improving Habitat...

Regardless of whether one uses herbicides or not, protective gear is a must. Safety glasses are highly important to avoid eye damage from branches and thorns, as well as possible splash from herbicides if you're using them. A good pair of gloves, leather if you're just cutting or pulling and chemical resistant if you're using herbicide, are also critical. Boots, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt will help avoid cuts and scratches. Remember to use insect repellents to avoid ticks during the warmer part of the year.

Timewise I probably spend 3-4 hours a month in the fall and winter on cutting and treating. I try to work on small areas (a few hundred square feet) when tackling established infestations. Some of these areas will suffer a flush of garlic mustard when first opened up and I've not found a good alternative to pulling in those cases.

Yes, this all sounds like a lot of work, and it is. The effort is ongoing to fight off reinfestations. But the payoff has been an increase in wildflowers (Trilliums, May Apples, phlox, wingstem, white snake root, and many others), as well as wildlife. The area is now a mini nature area that is enjoyed by my family and my neighbors.

About the Author:

Mark Peterson and his wife Angie live on a small acreage just outside of West Lafayette, Indiana. Mark grew up on a farm in South Dakota, received a PhD in Agronomy from South Dakota State University, and spent 31 years working in Weed Science for Dow AgroSciences.

Currently retired, Mark enjoys the outdoors and is an Indiana Master Naturalist. He is a member of The Nature Conservancy, NICHES, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, the North Central Weed Science Society, and the Indiana Native Plant Society.



Trilliums are now much more common in the cleared areas.

Follow Us on Facebook

TICT Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/TippecanoeInvasiveCooperativeTaskforce>

NICHES Land Trust Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/NICHEShelpingecosystemssurvive>

Prophetstown State Park Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/prophetstownsp/>

RIP Squad: <https://www.facebook.com/RIP-Squad-102185094741433>

Wabash River Enhancement Corporation: <https://www.facebook.com/WabashRiver>

Get Involved

- Join the TICT Education Committee to support education and outreach projects. Email - Amanda Estes at aestes@lafayette.in.gov or Mary Cutler at mcutler@tippecanoe.in.gov if interested.
- TICT is also in the process of creating an Eradication Committee (contact John Muller, jmuller@westlafayette.in.gov, 765-464-4045) and a Reporting Committee (contact: Angie Garcia-Miller, angela.garcia-miller@in.nacdn.net). If you are interested in helping, contact those listed above.

SWCD Launches Tippecanoe Invasive Species Initiative

By: Angie Garcia-Miller, Tippecanoe County Soil & Water Conservation District

The Tippecanoe County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) recently received funding for a local initiative focused on invasive species. Funded through a Clean Water Indiana grant, this 3-year initiative is comprised of three major components: the development and dissemination of educational materials, the establishment of a cost-share program, and the creation of an Invasive Species Technician position. Goals of this initiative correspond to the Strategic Plans of both the SWCD and TICT by increasing public awareness about invasive species, increasing invasive species reporting and increasing the amount of invasive species control.

The SWCD will be seeking applicants for the Invasive Species Technician in the near future. The Technician will be a part-time (approximately 25 hours per week) contractor, funded for 3 years. The salary will be \$26,000 per year, plus vehicle mileage allowance. Watch the SWCD website (www.tippecanoecountyswcd.org) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/TippecanoeSWCD>) for the latest updates.

Upcoming Events

- Wabash River Enhancement Corporation, Saturday December 4th, 10am-1pm AND Friday Dec 10th, 10am-1pm. Invasive removal workdays will take place at our natural area near the Ravines Golf Course in West Lafayette, near the intersection of Kerber and Division Roads. Directions will be emailed to you after sign up. This property is not currently open to the public outside of scheduled work days with staff. Sign up here: http://www.wabashriver.net/volunteer_ch/
- Save the date: Prophetstown State Park, March 5th, 2022 Invasive Species Identification and Removal Workshop. Email Jenna Parks Freeman at jparks@dnr.in.gov to receive more details.



Project Updates: Report from November Invasive Plant Removal Workday at the Tippecanoe County Amphitheater

By: Mary Cutler, Tippecanoe County Naturalist

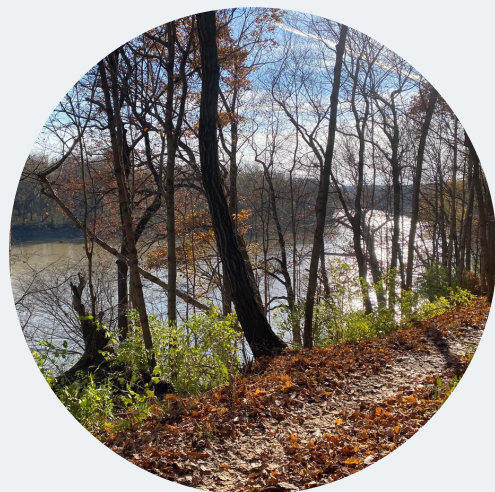
On Saturday, November 20, TICT partnered with Tippecanoe County Park & Recreation Department and Tippecanoe County Soil & Water Conservation District to host an Invasive Plant Removal Workday at the Tippecanoe Amphitheater property in West Lafayette. In addition to serving as the home of the Amphitheater (a venue for a wide range of performance events) the 166 acre property along the banks of the Wabash River is crisscrossed by a series of multi-purpose trails winding through oak-hickory woodlands and bottomland forests.

Our workday focused on removing invasive shrubs - mostly Asian bush honeysuckle - that threaten the floral diversity of the south end of the property. Despite a chilly, sleety start to the day, 17 people joined forces with hand tools, pullers and chain saws to cut shrubs, treat stumps with herbicide, and drag the brush to open areas for chipping. An incredible amount of honeysuckle, and some burning bush and privet, was removed during two work sessions that day!

We are incredibly grateful to all the community members who joined us in this effort, along with a team from the Tippecanoe Mountain Biking Association (who built and maintain these trails for community use). The shooting stars, hepatica, Dutchman's breeches, and trillium flourishing in this part of the park will attest to the success of these efforts next spring!



Thank you, volunteers!



Top to bottom: Trail prior to shrub removal, trail following shrub removal, a honeysuckle stump