

ENVIRONMENT + SUSTAINABILITY

NATIVE PRAIRIE RESTORATION

ITC's commitment to the environment begins with employees in our workplaces—and extends to building, operating, and maintaining our transmission systems.

Native prairie ecosystems found across the Midwest are vast stretches of flat, fertile grassland, known for their moderate temperatures and rainfall—and for being home to many species of wildflowers and wildlife.

Unfortunately, farming and development in recent decades have virtually eliminated native prairies, putting these plants and animals at risk.

In partnership with local communities, state and national agencies, and conservation groups, ITC is working to protect and restore these endangered ecosystems.

To avoid interference with power lines, vegetation in electric transmission corridors must be low-growing—as are many native prairie plants. As such, there are unique opportunities in these areas to remove invasive species and re-introduce native ones, ultimately re-creating native prairie ecosystems where they once thrived.

MICHIGAN

The Lakeplain Oak Openings region, covering 1,300 square miles across six counties in Michigan and Ohio, is a mix of forest and grassland that supports a number of rare plants and animals. With strong support from ITC, The Nature Conservancy has helped improve the health of this endangered glacial lakeplain landscape by:

- Conducting herbicide spraying, as well as coordinated mowing and controlled burning, in areas impacted by non-native species
- Increasing habitable area for native plants and animals
- Improving water quality
- Providing communities with a connection to local land through ecosystem education
- Prolonging positive impact of conservation efforts via routine maintenance

IOWA

In 2014, ITC initiated three transmission line corridor prairie restoration projects, covering approximately 42 acres, in and around Cedar Rapids:

- Beverly Park, City of Cedar Rapids - six acres
- Sac and Fox Trail City Park, City of Cedar Rapids - 30 acres
- Squaw Creek Park, Linn County - six acres

First, ITC's environmental team partnered with the City of Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation Department and Linn County Conservation Department to remove non-native herbaceous and incompatible woody vegetation via mowing, tilling, prescribed burning, and herbicide application.

Afterward, ITC oversaw selection and seeding of new species, including a diverse prairie mix of native grasses, wildflowers and broadleaf plants that serve to diversify the ecosystem and help prevent invasive trees from taking root (and potentially interfering with power lines). ITC conducts regular flora and fauna surveys to monitor project progress and maintenance needs.

Each of the three Iowa sites holds *Wildlife at Work* environmental site certifications from the Wildlife Habitat Council, serving to promote habitat conservation and management on corporate lands through partnerships and education.

ABOUT ITC

ITC's investments in power transmission infrastructure lower electricity costs, improve service reliability and safety, and increase economic activity and tax revenues for customers, stakeholders and communities.