



The Nature Conservancy
Protecting nature. Preserving life.

EFROYMSON RESTORATION AT Kankakee Sands

SUMMER 2018

BISON AT KANKAKEE SANDS © RICK KATZ, KANKAKEE SANDS VOLUNTEER

Bison calves at Kankakee Sands

Twelve bison calves were born at Kankakee Sands this spring! The protective bison cows kept their young calves well hidden in the tall grasses at first. But now that the calves are older, they are regularly seen grazing with the adults. Our bison herd is 50+ strong now, and it often separates into smaller groups for grazing. Visitors to Kankakee Sands may sometimes see a smaller group of five to seven bison grazing by themselves. These young bulls are exhibiting normal bison behavior.

Bison were brought to Kankakee Sands to help rejuvenate our prairies. We have on-going research to study bison-induced vegetation changes, bird populations, dung beetles, bison genetics and bison poop. There is never a dull moment on the prairie!

Bogus Island historical sign

Atop Bogus Island now sits an informational sign about the history of the majestic and mystical Bogus Island. At nearly 50 acres in size, Bogus Island was the largest of several islands within Beaver Lake, the largest lake in Indiana (until it was drained in the late 1800s). Native American artifacts and evidence of counterfeiters have been found on Bogus Island. The new sign captures this exciting time in our area's history.

Text for the sign was developed in partnership with the Newton County Historical Society and Jeff Manes, author of the documentary film *Everglades of the North: The Story of the Grand Kankakee Marsh*. Visit the Bison Overlook Area, climb your way to the top of Bogus Island, relive our local history and enjoy the beauty of the prairie.

Coming soon to the Bison Overlook Area: A Monarch Trail, highlighting monarch butterflies and the many milkweed species of Newton County. Stay tuned!



New Bogus Island sign at the Bison Overlook Area © Alyssa Nyberg/The Nature Conservancy

Conrad Station Savanna planting

This year we will be finishing an exciting two-year restoration at Conrad Station Savanna, located at the northern end of Kankakee Sands. Last year, we planted 43 acres, and this year we will plant the remaining 45 acres. The restoration will provide a critical habitat connection between Conrad Station Savanna and Kankakee Sands.

Included in this restoration planting will be 328 species of native flowers, grasses and sedges. A few of the many gorgeous plants that will be included in the restoration are wild lupine (*Lupinus perennis*), hoary puccoon (*Lithospermum croceum*), sweet grass (*Heirochloe odorata*), Hayden's sedge (*Carex haydenii*), and nine species of milkweeds. In addition to being beautiful, they are also important to the many animals and insects of Kankakee Sands.



Lupines and puccoon by Donna Lucas, Kankakee Sands Volunteer

There is always so much to do and see at Kankakee Sands. Come enjoy it all!
Kankakee Sands is free and open to the public every day of the year for non-consumptive use.

Welcoming this year's seasonal crew

Each year, for the past 20 years, we have hired seasonal staff—known as Field Technicians—to do the brutal work of managing our prairies. Their duties include removing invasive species, thinning tree density and assisting with prescribed fire. This year, we have an all-star staff of experienced crew members.

- **Evans Kyei** has travelled around the world, working and pursuing his Master of Science in Ghana, Kenya, Germany, UK and now in the United States.
- **Katey Powell** has been working with The Nature Conservancy in Indiana since 2015, when she was based out of the Southern Lake Michigan Rim Project. This is Katey's second season with us at Kankakee Sands.
- This year's crew is led by **Caitlin Muller**. This is Caitlin's third year working with us at Kankakee Sands, which means she is a bonified Kankakee Sands-er.
- **Brian Chill** has been working in conservation since 2009 in New Jersey, Oregon, Nevada, and his home state of Michigan.
- **Kaitlyn Braatz** has been working in Minnesota since 2016 in the field of conservation, specifically prescribed fire.



Evans, Katey, Caitlin, Brian and Kaitlyn, after a prescribed burn. © Derek Luchik/The Nature Conservancy

If you see any of our dedicated Field Technicians out working in the field, be sure to give them a wave!

Wish list

- **Truck, new or lightly used, two-wheel drive or four-wheel drive**
- **Brushcutter, Stihl FS 450**
- **Picnic table for the Native Plant Nursery**
- **3-point snow blade attachment for a 75hp John Deere tractor**
- **Binoculars, Steiner Hunting 10x42**
- **Paper grocery sacks with handles**

If you'd like to donate a Wish List item, please contact Ted Anchor at (219) 285-2184 or tanchor@tnc.org.

Join us for a volunteer workday

We host volunteer workdays on the second Saturday of every month. Come join us for a day of fun and adventure! After the workday, enjoy a trip to see the bison, hike along a trail or photograph the plants and animals of Kankakee Sands.

Invasive Species Removal Workday

Saturday, August 11, 9 a.m. - noon (Central time)

Join us for a morning of removing such invasive species common teasel, Queen Anne's lace, sweet clover, or spotted knapweed from our prairies. We will either hand pull the plants or use machetes to chop the plants at ground level. Contact Tony Capizzo for more information and to RSVP at acapizzo@tnc.org.

Seed Harvesting Workdays

Saturday, September 8, 9 a.m. - noon (Central time)

Saturday, October 13, 9 a.m. - noon (Central time)

It's pickin' time! Join us as we collect seed from a variety of native flower and grass species for use in our upcoming restoration plantings at Conrad Station Savanna. While we are collecting, there's no telling what we will see...flowers, butterflies, birds... After harvesting the seeds, we will transport them to our seed barn facility for drying and planting this winter. The workday is very family friendly and appropriate for all ages and abilities. Contact Alyssa Nyberg to RSVP or for more information at anyberg@tnc.org or (219) 866-1706.

Seed Cleaning Workday

Saturday, November 10, 9 a.m. - noon (Central time)

The seed harvest is finished, and now it is time to clean the seeds that will be used in our restoration planting this coming winter. Join us as we work with native plant seeds large and small, appreciating each and every one. Warning: the work can be a bit dusty and sneezy. We will provide training, work gloves, eye protection, and any other necessary protective gear. Contact Alyssa Nyberg to RSVP or for more information at anyberg@tnc.org or (219) 866-1706.



Seed harvesting workday photo by Leonard Mak, Kankakee Sands Volunteer

Want to volunteer, make a donation or learn more about Kankakee Sands?

If you would like more information about our conservation work and/or how you can be involved, visit us online at nature.org/kankakeesands or contact Alyssa Nyberg at (219) 866-1706 or anyberg@tnc.org. Thank you!