

PRAIRIE RESTORATION IN A POLAR VORTEX WINTER!

An interview with The Nature Conservancy Conservation Practitioner and a Director
with the *Friends of the Indian Boundary Prairies* of Markham, IL:

Mary Anicich

Q. “*Why and what do you cut off the prairies in the fall for later brush pile burns?*”

A. **Most of the brush we remove is non-native Buckthorn, but we also will cut native invasive Gray Dogwood, and trees such as Cottonwood, Cherry, Ash, Elm, and Hawthorne. Brush and trees are removed because they shade out and also grow in place of native grasses and forbs. Once the brush and trees are removed, the native grasses and forbs that are already in the seedbank, receive sunlight and begin to return.**

Q. “*Mary, have you had to reschedule any workdays because of the severe winter – sub-zero temperatures and deep snow? If so, do you file reports and do other indoor paperwork?*”

A. **You may be surprised to learn that I personally did not reschedule any workdays this winter due to snow or sub-zero temperatures. Although it may be difficult at time to walk through deep snow, I also have a sled on which to carry my tools, chainsaw, herbicide, and fire-starting supplies. Even during the blizzard a couple of years ago I was still getting out there and having workdays. Of course, without brush pile burning we wouldn't have been able to tolerate the extreme cold. And, once you start cutting and stacking you actually start to shed a few layers!**

Q. “*How are you able to keep brush piles dry enough to burn, with the deep snow? Is it difficult getting a fire going?*”

A. **I have gotten into the practice of putting a tarp over brush piles so that they stay dry for burning. Also, I carry a broom out to the field to sweep snow off any un-tarped piles. I am always very diligent about checking the weather and make sure I get out and tarp as many piles as I can when snow is forecast.**

Q. “*Do you wear special clothing in below-zero temperatures?*”

A. **Layer, layer, layer. If sub-zero temperatures are predicted, I wear two layers of long underwear, two pair of wool socks, denim pants, flannel shirts, sweatshirt, a knit hat and lined leather gloves. Cotton and wool are best for warmth and layering.**

Thank you, Mary.

Pat Brownlow

*Free to All
Games
Refreshments*

Earth Day Celebration

**Saturday, April 26, 2014
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

Paintbrush Prairie

**From Pulaski, go east on 155th Street past Millard Ave.
Park in the lot or on the north side of the street**

*Activities
Prairie Tours*



www.ibprairies.org