

UWSP Society for Ecological Restoration Student Chapter: Educating volunteers to promote wetland restoration and stewardship

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Introduction

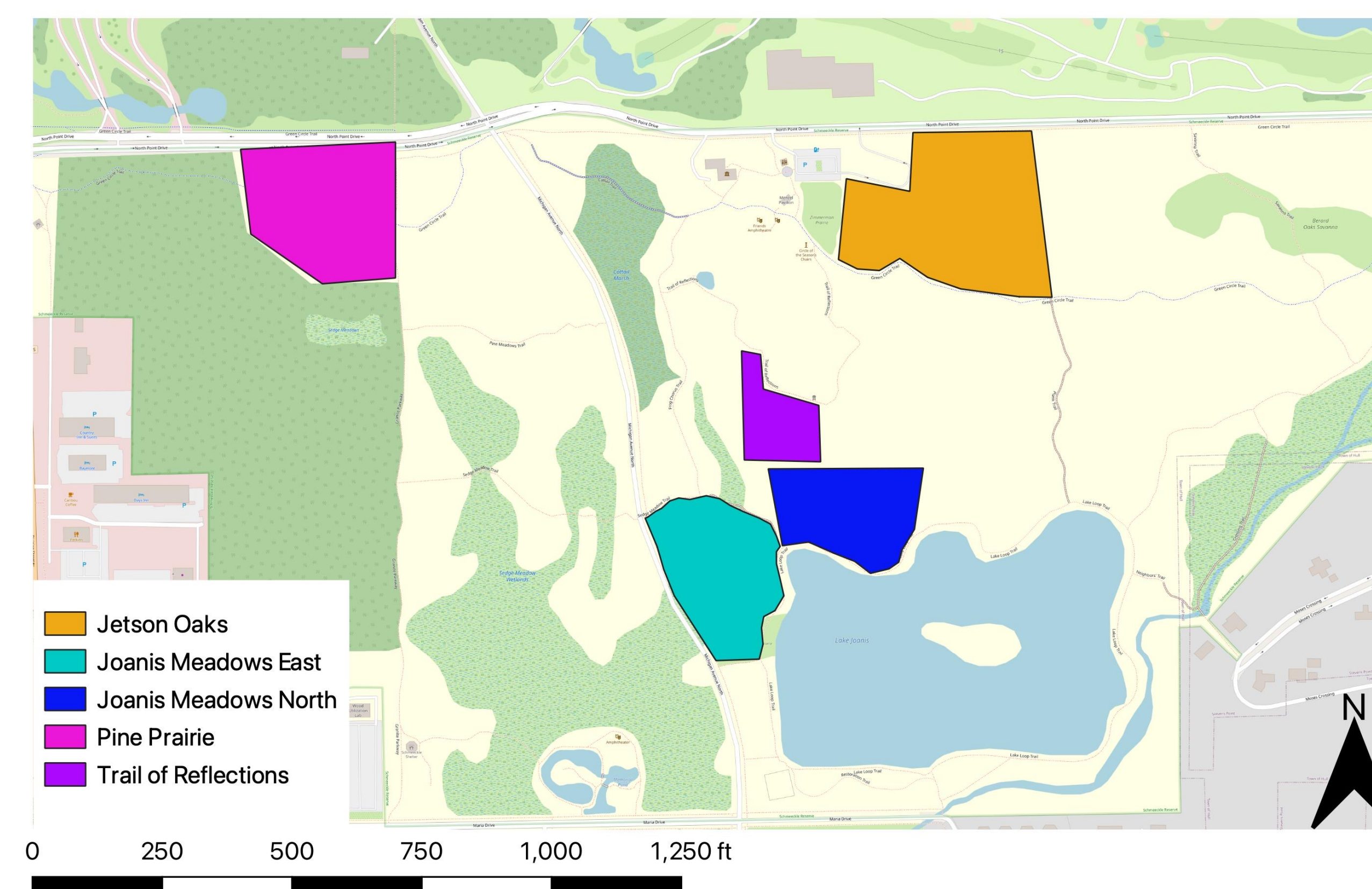
The UW-Stevens Point student chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) began teaching members in 2019 about stewardship. This includes restoration techniques and safety protocols to follow during volunteer workdays. Much of the work is done on campus in Schmeeckle Reserve, allowing for the success of this newly developed stewardship training.

Methods

- Developed textbook adapted from “International principles and standards for the practice of ecological restoration. Second edition”
- Focus on:
 - Purpose of restoration
 - Restoration techniques
 - Safety protocols
 - Leadership
- Workday activities:
 - Invasive species removal
 - Seed collection
 - Rotary seeding
 - Fuel reduction
 - Site preparation for prescribed burns

Results

Schmeeckle Reserve SER Stewardship Sites
Stevens Point, WI



- Since project implementation:
 - 961 volunteer hours
 - 11 stewards who completed training and ran stewardship sites
 - 81 different volunteers
 - Over 4 acres of restoration sites



Fig 1. Buckthorn piles after the Fall 2022 Restoration Celebration in Trail of Reflections



Fig 2. Stewards collecting seeds from sedges to plant on the Pine Prairie site

Conclusions

Providing volunteer opportunities to students attending this university allows for a larger community involvement in the practice of restoration. Using volunteers allows for work to be completed, even when there is insufficient funding for a project. The benefits of this training include professional skills that our volunteers/students can take into their community and the professional restoration field.

Literature cited

Gann GD, McDonald T, Walder B, Aronson J, Nelson CR, Jonson J, Hallett JG, Eisenberg C, Guariguata MR, Liu J, Hua F, Echeverria C, Gonzales, EK, Shaw N, Decler K, Dixon KW. 2019. International principles and standards for the practice of ecological restoration. Second edition. Restoration Ecology S1-S46

Acknowledgments

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- UWSP Fire Crew