

## BARRINGTON GREENWAY INITIATIVE

### SEED TECHNICIAN

In 2018, a Seed Technician was hired through joint funding from the Preservation Foundation, LCFPD Native Seed Nursery, and Citizens for Conservation. Luke Dahlberg has become fully integrated with all nursery operations, including: plant propagation, seed collection, assisting & leading volunteer workdays, and further strengthening the Barrington Greenway Initiative partnership.

#### Highlights:

- Roughly 31,000 plugs of native plant species were produced at the LCFPD greenhouse in 2018, an increase of 10,000 from previous years. This increase in production provided supplemental native plant materials for restoration of Ethel's Woods, Wright Woods, and has increased production areas at the Nursery. Additional plugs were grown to support BGI workdays in Grassy Lake, Cuba Marsh, and partner sites. Much of this increase is thanks to Luke's efforts, and the planting support from BGI volunteers.



Sedges grown in the LCFPD greenhouse



*Carex atherodes* produces few seeds, but spreads rapidly through vegetative reproduction. Division are the best way to spread this species in restorations.

- Luke & volunteers from Citizens for Conservation divided several species of woodland plants produced in the District's nursery. These divisions were transplanted to an oak woodland in Cuba Marsh known as "The Cathedral". Species included mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), and hairy-leaved lake sedge (*Carex atherodes*). Volunteers installed the plant material during a Barrington Greenway Initiative workday. Approximately 1,200 plugs were dug up and replanted.
- In June of 2018, Luke and BGI partners participated in a plant rescue on St. Mary's Rd right-of-way that is adjacent to Wright Woods and Grainger Woods. Several of these plant species, including dog violet (*Viola conspersa*) and awnless graceful sedge (*Carex formosa*), are threatened or endangered to the state of Illinois. These plants were translocated to several sites, including seed production areas, partnership restorations, and deeper into Wright & Grainger Woods.
- 63 flats of plant material were installed at Grassy Lake forest preserve during a BGI workday. The 2000 plugs for this project were grown at the nursery, with an emphasis on wetland restoration.
- Both LCFPD and CFC were able to increase the diversity of plant species in their preserves to record high levels in 2018! Many rare and priceless seeds (not available on the commercial market) were collected. Both partners also exchanged seeds to improve the genetic diversity

with local sources; using multiple local sources will help sustain populations for their long-term survival.



Luke (on the far right) planting with volunteers

- Luke led & supported workdays with volunteers and/or the Youth Conservation Corp crew at the Nursery, other forest preserves, and BGI workdays.
- Luke's knowledge, experience and training propagating native plant material differs from Kelly Schultz, the Nursery Coordinator, perfectly complementing Kelly's propagation experience. Mutual exchange of this knowledge not only increased the current success at the nursery, but will also advance propagation techniques in the years to come.

- BGI workdays have been productive for all partners, with CFC staff & Luke leading workdays on LCFPD properties and other sites.

- Luke has provided valuable labor at many of the preserves, from seed collection to planting help. He spent time scouting out species, sharing updates on when seeds were ripe, and personally collecting many special and rare species.

- Towards the end of the year, Kelly Schultz transitioned from her position as Nursery Coordinator to Stewardship Ecologist II. Luke increased his commitment to LCFPD when Kelly was needed elsewhere – running volunteer workdays at the nursery, processing seed solo, and caring for the greenhouse. The volunteers have enjoyed working with him and learning from him.



BGI workday, collecting a barrel-full of woodland grasses

- At the Wild Things Conference in February, Luke & Kelly participated on a panel discussion about propagating rare plants. Insiders from the conference later shared that this panel was one of the highest rated sessions. Kevin, land manager for CFC, also presented on the partnership and highlighted the Technician position (and resulting knowledge sharing) as the top value of the partnership. Almost 2500 people attended this conference.

- 2019 is on track for another highly productive year!

The greenhouse is packed to the gills with plants, mostly due to Luke's efforts. Over 22,000 plugs have been grown already, with more on the way.

- Volunteers from across the BGI partnership have joined forces to rescue plants from the St. Mary's corridor prior to the DOT construction, and in Rollins Savanna prior to the new trail construction. Having partners working together on a regular basis makes collaboration easy. Thousands of plants have already been salvaged this spring.



Collaborative plant rescues



Half of the greenhouse, April 2019

*the benefits from this first year are enormous!  
thank you for your support  
kelly R schultz*