

ArcelorMittal Research and Development Center



Dune and Swale Restoration Project, East Chicago, Indiana
 Laura Milkert, Keller Science Action Center, The Field Museum, Chicago IL



Photos by Susan Kirt and Laura Milkert. Produced by Laura Milkert and Tyana Wachter.

[fieldguides.fieldmuseum.org] **Rapid Color Guide #882** version 1 05/2017

In the spring of 2013, ArcelorMittal, in partnership with the Field Museum, launched an exciting project to restore ten acres of “dune and swale” habitat on the campus of the Global R&D Center in East Chicago, IN. “Dune and swale” is a globally unique type of natural habitat that occurs along the southern rim of Lake Michigan. It consists of undulating ridges of low sand dunes and long narrow wetlands that were created as glacial Lake Chicago (the precursor to Lake Michigan) receded thousands of years ago.

Museum ecologists noted the site’s unique topography, undisturbed sandy soils, and a few native plants growing in the rougher areas of the site. These were all clues that something very special lay beneath the mowed field. These suspicions were confirmed when mowing of the area ceased and thousands of native plants emerged. A plant inventory in 2015 already documented over 75 species of plants, including one state-endangered species, Mountain Blue-eyed Grass, and two state-threatened species, Golden and Prairie Hummock Sedge. An ecological contractor has also been hired to control invasive species and weeds within the dune and swale habitat. A new walking trail around the site and interpretive signage invite visitors to explore and watch this beautiful piece of Indiana’s heritage come back to life.



Nodding Onion
Allium cernuum



Swamp Milkweed
Asclepias incarnata



Dense Blazing Star
Liatris spicata



Skyblue Aster
Symphotrichum oolentangiense



Virginia Iris
Iris virginica var. *shrevei*



American Blue-eyed grass
Sisyrinchium montanum



Virginia Mountain mint
Pycnanthemum virginianum



Big Bluestem
Andropogon gerardi



Indiangrass
Sorghastrum nutans



Smooth Rose
Rosa blanda



Research and Development Center Dune and Swale Trail Map



Arcelor staff check on the progress of and watch the prescribed fire November 2016



Contractors conduct the first ever prescription burn of the site



Arcelor staff collect native prairie seeds to expand the restoration area at the site



View of the campus, and sand coreopsis blooming, a few months after mowing stopped