

# LINCOLN BOYHOOD NATIONAL MEMORIAL REFORESTS

By DON F. ADAMS

IN SEPTEMBER 1992, LINCOLN Boyhood National Memorial, Indiana, received a \$40,000 grant through the National Park Foundation from the Drackett Company (manufacturers of O'Cedar, Drano, Vanish products) to reforest 0.025 ha (2.5 acres) of land adjacent to the Memorial Visitor Center and parking plaza. On May 6, 1993, following the presentation of the check to Superintendent Paul Guraedy by former NPS Director James Ridenour, the honored guests, the Drackett Company, National Park Foundation, and NPS representatives visited the site to turn spadefuls of earth around a 4.6m-tall (15 ft) ash tree. These actions launched the reforestation project, made known the Foundation's support, and recognized the Drackett Company's generosity and their "Great American Clean Up Campaign." (Note: S.C. Johnson Co. absorbed the Drackett Company in 1993-1994.)

## PLANTING BEGINS

Managers opted to first plant 100 landscape-size native hardwoods averaging 2.76m tall (8 ft) in the south meadow east of the visitor center (figure 1). A local nursery accomplished this in December 1993 for \$6,000. The bundled-up crew of two men and two women planted, staked, and wrapped 20 black oaks, 30 white oaks, and 10 each, red oaks, shagbark hickories, dogwoods, and white ash—all in one day. Our only concern was that a few trees seemed to march in straight lines instead of appearing randomly placed; the trees were spaced 3m (10ft) apart. (We planned this spacing in order to freely maneuver a pickup truck, water truck, and ATV.) On the next round of planting in April 1995,

we added 30 more trees to the south meadow, plus a contractor replaced 14 trees that had died.

Trees that died?

Yes! Although only five trees

failed to leaf out in the spring, the summer of '94 was uncommonly hot and dry. Rainfall was six inches below normal. Despite fire hose waterings by park staff and Youth Conservation Corps (that included a few great water fights) we lost nine more trees due to temperatures reaching the high 90s. Apparently, we also lost some to creatures that we didn't know about as we found inch-long, grayish white worms inside the dogwood tree trunks. We were lucky in one respect: the brazen, grazin' white-tailed deer left our trees alone—this time.

Another challenge in 1994 was the attempted takeover of the south meadow by weeds, grasses, and thousands of thorny black locust sprouts. So we mowed the meadow in late summer and successfully applied Round Up™ herbicide around the bases of all the new trees. That year, a remnant highway and abandoned septic system east of the visitor center were also removed and the area landscaped for about \$10,000.

In the spring of 1995, another landscaping company planted 200 white oaks, red oaks, ash, shagbark hickory, black cherry, and black walnuts in the north meadow. Interestingly, on recommendation of the landscaper, they planted these young trees experimentally in "family groups," or clusters, with the same spacing, as opposed to the totally random planting in the south meadow. A maintenance crew mowed the meadows and used Round Up™ herbicide to control weeds and grasses around the



Figure 1. The Drackett grant provided funds for the reforestation project, which began in December 1992 with 100 trees.

trees. Monitoring found that our new dogwood trees planted in 1993 were infested with borer insects, but no action was taken to purchase and apply the recommended Dursban (insecticide) at that time. (A tree care expert informed us that injection fertilization of the trees in spring and fall would likely reduce or eliminate the need for Dursban.) Impressed with this reasoning, we plan to initiate a periodic fertilization program.

For 1996, we awarded the third planting contract for \$6,000. The contract called for setting 100 2.16m-tall (7ft) native hardwoods in the old roadbed east of the visitor center parking plaza, and replacing about 34 trees that had died in the adjoining meadows.

Problems included delays in receiving the trees, heavy rains and soft ground, which delayed planting by 2 weeks and required the planting crew to use wheelbarrows to transport trees to the site. (The contractor grumbled, but we held firm.) A crew of four, as was customary with this company, hand dug the holes for the trees, which by now were in full leaf. We experienced another delay of 2 weeks getting the replacement trees planted in the meadows, apparently because of other commitments by the company. After several calls, the crew finally returned and planted the trees, which had been "parked" in their ball and burlap "diapers" and kept watered down by park staff. (This time we grumbled—loudly!) Following more calls, the crew returned and fin-

ished the job by mulching and staking the replacement trees.) To date, 18 of the newly planted landscape trees have died and have been replaced by the contractor. Weekend watering, however, is benefiting all the trees and, as landscapers like to say, “may bring the rest out.”

Fortunately, enough money remains in the Drackett account to contract fertilizing, pesticide care, and tree replacements for the next 2 years—time needed for young oaks, ashes, hickories, dogwoods, and walnuts to establish themselves, spread their roots, and fight off insects.

The deer returned. Oh yes! Young bucks with blazing hormones and itchy

antlers rubbed raw many of our healthiest landscape trees a year ago. All survived—bucks and trees—but the superintendent had all she could do to restrain the resource management ranger from charging the deer with trespass and high velocity rock salt.

In summary, despite all kinds of problems, the landscape trees planted in two meadows and the old roadbed over



Figure 2. Trees in the North Meadow are doing well and are beginning to look like a fine young forest.

### LOOKING BACK

We did not realize the awesome responsibility of nurturing 100 trees initially, then 200 more, and finally 450 landscape-size natives when we received the munificent \$40,000 grant. We also did not comprehend that baby oaks become mighty and need water, extra nutrients, and lots of care. For example, summer rainfall in southern Indiana seldom fur-

the past 4 years are beginning to look like a fine young forest (figure 2). With care, we can be proud of our contribution to the life of Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, as we watch our youngsters start to grow big and strong for future generations. After all, it was in this place 170 years ago that two mothers and a father

watched their youngster grow big and strong, and wondered –would he get on?



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nishes an inch of rain a week. Although we water the trees, we have found it difficult to keep up with the task as staff has melted away through the years. The YCC (Youth Conservation Corps) is gone. VIPs (Volunteers-in-Parks) are difficult to find. The maintenance staff is down. Resource managers are willing, but are becoming older and slower and creaky in the joints.

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