

UPDATE

April 2014

No Prescribed Burn This Year

There will be no prescribed burn this spring. This is in line with the High Park Woodland & Savannah Management Plan. After an approximate 10-year catch-up period of intensive burning in the park, it is time to enter a maintenance phase with smaller less frequent burns.

A variety of sites both inside and outside the park will be monitored and prepared throughout the year for an anticipated 2015 burn.

Forestry Update

Over the winter Forestry staff have been busy dealing with impacts from the ice storm damage to trees, as well as Emerald Ash Borer management which involved large scale Ash removals at 5 woodlots across the City. Luckily High Park did not receive much damage from the ice storm, and has limited Ash trees so fared pretty well this winter.

Forestry staff were able to take advantage of the cold frozen ground conditions and get some large invasive trees removed in a few priority areas. Similar removals are planned this fall.

The lower Dog trail was officially closed in December 2013 as part of a multi-year plan that reviewed improvements needed as well as the sustainability of trails. Staff will be undertaking restoration projects in these areas this spring.

Restoration Progress and a Master Plan for High Park

While we are aware of signs of progress (e.g. oak regeneration), it would be helpful to get more specific information from Forestry on how the management plan is progressing, what are the concerns/achievements, what steps are planned for the future, etc. Is it apparent enough to others (City departments and officials, etc. plus the community) that much of High Park has protected status? Are the park's natural areas being adequately protected? How do the work events carried out by volunteer stewards tie in with overall restoration plans? What are the key indicators of progress? *[Note: One indicator is the status of wildlife in the park – see [Improvements for Wildlife.](#)]*

A master plan for High Park has been talked about for years but there is no sign of it moving forward. Should we be doing more to push this to the priority level? With more pressure on the park, from both intensification and organized activities, a Master Plan to direct activity is even more important than ever.

We will continue to pursue these concerns in discussions with Forestry staff and through other avenues.

Ongoing Efforts to Protect Wildlife at Grenadier Pond

The proposed fishing and wildlife protection area signs are closer to completion. In the meantime illegal and hazardous behaviours are evident once again at the pond. These include waterfowl tangled in fishing gear and unleashed dogs disturbing nesting sites in the marsh. At last report, no Family Fishing Day event has been approved for High Park this year. High Park has already hosted this event for 7 years and is under heavy pressures from fishing practices. We strongly recommend that other sites be considered instead.

Possible Outreach Opportunities

We discussed the potential role of art in communicating about the natural features of High Park, while noting that natural spaces also need to be protected from well-intentioned but unsuitable projects. Used with care, art can be a powerful way of engaging the public.

One possibility is to produce an illustrated map of High Park featuring the natural areas and the wildlife and flora to be found there. Another idea is to prepare more display materials to use at public events, such as next year's PanAm Games which will hold events in High Park. These and other ideas will be discussed further. (See also the City's new high-impact "[Bloomin' Trees](#)" signs.)

Stewardship Activities

The High Park Stewards had a very successful winter education series that highlighted environmental activities in schools and in the community, invasive species research and the importance of watershed preservation. This was followed by several sessions in the native plant nursery where we prepared seeds for propagation, transplanted seedlings and removed mulch from over wintering plants.

Our spring sessions will focus on maintaining our restoration sites, including a spring cleanup, plant monitoring and invasive species removal. The Boulevard Beds will be enhanced with new plants and removal of tall species near entrances to the parking lot. The Elite Invasive Squad has joined the Ontario Invasive Plants Council and is working on a strategy for keeping garlic mustard and hedge parsley under control in our restoration sites.

Our Native Plant Sale will be held on Sunday, May 11 from 11am to 2pm and will be located in front of the High Park Greenhouse. See our [website](#) for more details.