



UPDATE

November 2, 2011

Prescribed Burn & Restoration Plans

Infill planting continues at the burn sites, especially the north savannah and the All-Star savannah, as well as random in-fill planting at other sites. Burns will continue in future years, although likely to be smaller areas and with less frequency. The next burn is tentatively scheduled for spring 2012, and will be preceded by the removal of invasive shrubs and trees and hazardous tree limbs.

A solarization sheet has been put down at the former Picnic Site 7 to prevent weeds from spreading to adjacent Tablelands restoration sites.

Weir at South End of Grenadier Pond

We have determined that the adjustable weir at the southwest corner of the pond meant to regulate the pond's water levels has not been operated for a number of years. Park Operations has indicated that it is not part of their duties and that it is not something volunteers should do. Forestry is attempting to get this matter addressed by Toronto Water, which operates the Wendigo Pond weir.

In general, responsibility for the land portion of the park is well-defined, but responsibility for the pond is not. We plan to continue our efforts to make sure this significant natural feature is given due attention.

Grenadier Pond Interpretive Signs Project

The heron prototype sign is now in production. Seven others have been submitted, along with photos, for layout by City staff, then to be produced and installed in 2012. TD Friends of the Environment is providing a grant for these signs.

Restoration Site near Lower Duck Pond & BMX Bikes

The City's Urban Forestry team initiated restoration of a degraded hillside in the south area of High Park in May after a staff assessment concluded that continued informal use of the site as a BMX freestyle skills park was not sustainable. Some of the steeper hills were graded, and large amounts of oak leaves were deposited in an effort to trap topsoil and improve the organic content. Later, some planting of hardier species will be done.

The City's Natural Environment Trails Program staff have been investigating the possibility of establishing a formal facility for BMX bikes, possibly in High Park. We have requested a meeting with Trails staff to discuss this matter and express concerns about the difficulty of limiting such an activity to the designated area and the amount of unauthorized bike activity it may attract to the park.

High Park Nature is a joint initiative of the High Park Natural Environment Committee (NEC) and the High Park Volunteer Stewardship Program (VSP/High Park Stewards). The NEC is a volunteer group that advises the City of Toronto on the protection and restoration of the natural features of High Park, and promotes awareness and respectful enjoyment of the park's natural heritage. This newsletter reports highlights from NEC meetings and other park news.

Parks Plan Review

Parks Forestry and Recreation is preparing a Parks Plan that will guide acquisition, development, management and operation of the system of public parkland in the City of Toronto over a five-year period. Four public consultation sessions are being held. We have participated in a consultation session for stakeholder groups. To find out more about how you can participate and speak up for nature and for High Park, see [our website](#) or [the City's website](#). Be sure to complete the [survey](#) by December 16th.

Hosting Ontario Nature Regional Meeting

High Park Nature, in partnership with Toronto Field Naturalists, hosted an Ontario Nature Regional meeting on Oct. 15 that included a tour of the Nature Centre and a hike to its restoration site near the TTC Loop. Some out-of-town attendees had never visited the park before, or not for many years. Thanks to all who helped make this a success!

HPN & VSP Receive Award

High Park Nature and the Volunteer Stewards Program received a Paul McGaw Memorial Conservation Award at the [North American Native Plant Society](#) annual general meeting on October 22. The award was given "in recognition of your organizations' amazing work protecting and improving the urban forest at the community level." See the [award notice](#), [media release](#) and [news article](#). Thanks to all the volunteers and City staff who made this possible!

High Park Stewards Conclude Season

The VSP season ended on November 27 with one more "Buckthorn Busting" event followed by a potluck party. Fleur Careil has joined Sharon Lovett as VSP Co-Chair. Planning for the winter educational series is now underway.

Help Promote the High Park Nature Website

To increase website traffic, we are adding a "tell a friend about this website" link. Anyone involved with another website can help by adding a link to our site.

Volunteers Needed:

- To liaise with those doing nature/environment-based research in the park, for purposes of facilitating it and posting results on our website.
- To liaise with artists/writers doing work relating to the park, to showcase their work on our website.

If you are interested, please contact mail@highparknature.org.