

UPDATE

July 2015

Forestry Update

The prescribed burn took place on April 15 this year. More details can be found [here](#).

Mowing protocols, including the location of the areas to be mowed, were presented to the Grounds Maintenance Staff. The first mow defines the boundaries to help ensure that subsequent mows do not stray into native plantings.

Dredging of Stormwater Ponds

Wendigo Pond, Howard Pond and Ridout Pond were all dredged over the winter. A small shoreline planting was done under TRCA supervision this spring, with volunteer assistance.

We were previously advised that, in the final phase, when the anti-erosion work has been undertaken, the TRCA will narrow the gravel path and restore the area around these ponds. The current condition of the sites is quite unsatisfactory. Forestry staff are following up with Toronto Water about further remediation. We will continue to follow up as well with relevant staff.

The dredging of Upper and Lower Duck Ponds is scheduled for winter of 2015/2016.

Signage Projects

Both the fishing-related signage and Phase 2 of the interpretive sign project have now been completed.

A [media release](#) about the fishing-related signs was issued by our committee on June 22, 2015. So far there seems to be a high level of compliance by people fishing at the pond with respect to the area where fishing is or is not permitted. Volunteers continue to collect fishing line etc. to help reduce risk to wildlife. Some minor details regarding the signs still need to be dealt with (e.g. the bylaw signs). Most of the signs are posted [here](#).

There are 10 new interpretive signs, adding to the 8 signs from Phase 1 and the prototype sign for a grand total of 19. All of these signs are posted [here](#). We plan to have a celebratory tour sometime after the summer, tentatively aiming for Sunday, October 4, 11 am.

Orientation for Park Operations Staff

A presentation on High Park's natural heritage (its beauty, wonder, history, ecology, diversity, stewardship and benefits) was created by Frank Remiz, and presented to the grounds maintenance and gardening staff on May 8, on behalf of High Park Nature. This was followed by a

discussion with park supervisory staff on current management issues/challenges. These forums were designed to instill an extra measure of attention and care among those who are less familiar with the park. They were well-received, and we plan to hold them again next year.

Design Input for Ornamental Gardens

There has been some preliminary discussion among staff about developing a Master Plan for Hillside Gardens. Such a document would convey a unified vision, and ensure that plantings and activities adhere to a pre-established set of criteria. We discussed the idea of submitting a discussion paper to contribute to this plan, for example to recognize and complement the garden's context within a park of ecological significance. (It was also noted that three snapping turtles have laid eggs at the sand feature uphill from the fishing pier.)

Dog-related Concerns

Following a submission of various concerns with the current situation, key City staff from Urban Forestry and Operations met to plan a strategy that includes increased by-law enforcement, public education, and sustained attention to the integrity of the fence. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of these efforts. Incidents or concerns should be reported to 311 or 311@toronto.ca.

Consultations, etc.

Committee members gave input re amendments to the Official Plan re Environmentally Significant Areas; development of a City-wide Ravine Strategy; Way-finding Strategy; Urban Fishing Strategy; and Karner Blue reintroduction planning. Some also attended a regional meeting of Ontario Nature and participated in a public walking tour related to a Cultural Landscapes conference.

Stewardship Activities

Some greenhouse work was carried out during the winter, and transplanting was done in the early spring. At the native plant sale in May, over 1,000 plants were sold, which raised over \$6,000. Special thanks to Linda Read for coordinating the plant sale. Summer sessions are focusing on invasive species removal.

See the High Park Nature [website](#) for more details of upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.