

### **Prescribed Burn Site Tour and Planning**

In September we attended a site tour of staff and consultants to revisit areas burned last spring. Overall results seem positive but some invasive plants, such as the grove of maple seedlings on the Tablelands, may need more treatment. The big bluestem grasses on the Sculpture Hill site are more robust this year and provide a good foundation for savannah restoration.

There may not be a prescribed burn next spring; rather, Forestry may focus on more removal of woody invasives (trees and shrubs) over the winter and other site maintenance work.

### **Other Restoration Progress and Plans**

Concerns about mowing encroaching on natural areas were raised with the Park supervisor, resulting in significant improvement. Black landscape fabric has been laid down on several sites in preparation for future planting, including one close to the Labyrinth area where the mowing had previously been excessive.

Phase 2 of the renovations to the dogs off-leash area has begun. This includes redirection of the lower path to follow around the allotment gardens to protect the ravine slope.

### **Grenadier Pond Site Tour**

On July 12, representatives of Toronto Region Conservation (TRCA), Toronto Parks, Forestry and Water and the Natural Environment Committee met at Grenadier Pond and reviewed the state of the pond. On the whole, Gord MacPherson of TRCA observed that the pond is in a much healthier state than it was in the 1980s, likely due to a number of measures taken over the years (shoreline restoration, sedimentation pond, changes in turf management practices on the nearby slope, etc.)

Some of the issues discussed were: plans to dredge Wendigo Pond; beaver activity; wet areas along the trail; shoreline erosion; floating vegetation, including algae mats and Eurasian water milfoil as well as duckweed; phragmites; operation of the southwest weir; fishing impacts; road salting practices on Park roads; and ongoing monitoring and management. We will continue to follow up on a number of proposed actions arising from the meeting.

### **Fish Die-Off at Grenadier Pond**

Unfortunately, shortly after the July 12 meeting a significant die-off of fish was observed starting July 28. Concerned park users, including NEC members, were in touch with the authorities, including the TRCA and the MNR.

The City conducted a clean-up a few days later to remove dead fish where possible. Testing of dead fish determined that the cause of infection is unclear but appeared to be bacterial. Water testing did not show any toxic substances and found the dissolved oxygen and water temperature levels to be normal at the time tested. On a positive note, the populations of various fish species continue to be at a healthy level.

### **Grenadier Pond Interpretive Signs Project – Phase 2**

All signs and suggested photos and images have been submitted to the City for layout and production. For more information about this project see the project [webpage](#).

### **Ongoing Efforts to Protect Wildlife at Grenadier Pond**

Abandoned line and hooks continues to be a concern, and the recent lower water levels have exposed even more hazardous debris. We are working with City staff to develop signage to identify wildlife protection areas where fishing and other activities are not allowed, and to promote best practices and compliance with the City's fishing by-law. Also, we prepared a factsheet on responsible fishing practices that was distributed at the Family Fishing Day in July.

### **Other Items**

The GPS-based **Tree Tour** project is partly completed and can be viewed [here](#). A downloadable map is being prepared. The question of signage and labels on the trees is still to be resolved.

Check @highparknature on **Twitter** for frequent news items.

### **Stewardship Activities**

The High Park Stewards concentrated on the Tablelands over the summer, pulling garlic mustard, hedge parsley, Asian bittersweet and ragweed. They also did some weeding and transplanting at the native plant nursery in the High Park Greenhouse; Boulevard Bed clean-ups; and wildflower planting at the former picnic site near the Labyrinth. The Elite Invasive Squad pulled a large amount of garlic mustard, making significant progress on the Tablelands.

This fall there will be three buckthorn cutting events, and the winter education series is in the planning stage. For more information visit [www.highparknature.org](http://www.highparknature.org).

A core group of Stewards who have upgraded knowledge about restoration work now meets once a month to plan activities.