

*This newsletter is based on the HP Natural Environment Committee submission to the HP Resource Group meeting of September 25, 2019.*

### **Phragmites Treatment**

In mid to late October TRCA will be spading any phragmites that has come up within the terrestrial areas that were already managed. "Last year we had about 85% phragmites die off and only around 15% has come back up. The spading technique has worked very well for us in other sites and it just requires a spade to cut the phragmites at the base of the stem. We are also going to pick one aquatic phragmites stand that is small and use the same spading technique on that patch. We will also be mowing all dead phragmites that is currently standing in the terrestrial areas to allow for new growth of native plants in the spring. Next year we will be revisiting the aquatic phragmites and will look to see how the terrestrial phragmites has fared." No pond draw-down or chemical treatment is planned for fall 2019.

Source: Katie Turnbull, Senior Project Manager, TRCA. For more information see our [website](#).

### **Prescribed Burn**

High Park's designated black oak woodland and savannah is a fire-dependent plant community. Fire promotes the growth of prairie shrubs by "pruning" them, kills competing native and most exotic plants, and blackens the soil so that it warms faster and promotes spring growth. The Iroquois sand plains of which High Park is the City of Toronto's largest remnant have been deliberately burned for about 4000 years.

Landowners in southern Ontario may wish to burn their own properties as part of ecological restoration. Such burns are usually determined to be of low complexity and the landowners may undertake training from the MNR in order to do so safely. However, the sites at High Park (as well as Lambton Park and South Humber Park) are located on public land with nearby buildings and other structures. These features generate additional complications such that the burns are determined to be of high complexity.

However, the MNR has not offered training in high complexity burns for some time. There is only one provider, Lands and Forests Consulting, qualified to conduct high complexity burns. That is why City staff seeks a Non-Competitive Contract. The Infrastructure and Environment Committee approved such a contract, including renewal for up to 5 years, at its September meeting, and Council approved it in October.

Source: Most of this information is summarized from the Council agenda's [background file](#) which also contains a history of the High Park burns.

Sites originally intended to be burned this spring (2019) will be included in the burn plan for next spring.

### **High Park Management Plan**

Urban Forestry is conducting gap analysis and review of burn sites to update the High Park Management Plan. The 2002 version of the management plan is posted on the High Park Nature [website](#). (A 2008 version is available on request from the City.)

### **Aerial Spraying**

In previous minutes the NEC expressed concern that aerial spraying for caterpillars of the invasive gypsy moth in High Park would negatively impact non-target lepidopteran (butterflies and moths) species. Caterpillars are food for migratory birds, both on stopover and raising young. On October 24 a discussion is planned with Forest Health Care of Urban Forestry, NEC reps, and people with relevant knowledge and expertise who could comment on our committee's concerns and discuss the practices appropriate for this protected area.

### **High Park Stewards**

Late summer events were well attended. Volunteers planted 1000 native plants on Sept. 8 on Hawk Hill. On Sept. 22 we were seed collecting in the Tablelands and Hawk Hill. Our sessions on October 27 and November 10 and 24 will be Common Buckthorn Busting. The Boulevard Beds (near Grenadier Restaurant) have been redesigned and replanted. Over 150 volunteers participated so far in 2019. We are in the process of planning our winter speaker series.

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

NOTE: The Stewards' Sunday lecture on January 12, 2020 will feature the results of the recent TRCA inventory of High Park. This event is co-sponsored by the NEC.

### **High Park Nature – Website Upgrade**

Work is much closer to completion.

### **Proposed Viewing Node**

TRCA has suggested a viewing node structure for Grenadier Pond. We will be writing to recommend this not be built.

### **High Park Moth Study**

Field monitoring this year brought the total species to over 900. The study was featured in a [Toronto Star front-page article in August](#).