

UPDATE

October 28, 2010

Prescribed Burn

Forestry held a site meeting in September with technical and volunteer representatives to review the results of past prescribed burns and other management techniques, and to develop plans for a prescribed burn in spring 2011. Burn cycle frequency and photo-monitoring practices were also discussed. In October Forestry staff met separately with Fred Bruin, the Fire Boss. He was particularly impressed with the extent of oak regeneration.

In total, 8 ha of oak savannah are identified for potential burns next year. Extensive prep work would be needed, including some removal of invasive trees and shrubs. Forestry is also developing a communication plan.

Fire Conference

Beth McEwen and Jennifer Gibb of Forestry spoke about the High Park prescribed burn program at a Wildland Fire Canada conference in Kitchener in early October. Their presentation, *A Progress Report on Oak Savannah Restoration in Toronto*, is posted at [this website](#). Attendees from other cities, including Victoria BC, were interested to hear how Toronto had been able to conduct prescribed burns in an urban environment. Others spoke about the positive role of fire in managing parks and forests, vs. the unhealthy consequences of suppressing all fires (as promoted by Smoky the Bear).

Park Operations/Natural Environment

Jennifer Gibb and Karen Yukich met with Jorge Ture, the Park Supervisor, to review a number of areas of overlap between park operations and the natural environment. Subjects discussed included: mowing (not encroaching on natural areas), leaf collection (not dumping leaves into natural areas), leaving fallen trees when they don't block paths (e.g. trees that fall into the water along the edge of Grenadier Pond). Jorge cautioned that the agreed protocols might inadvertently not be followed (e.g., due to staff changes, work done by non-park staff), and requested that he be contacted immediately if any problems arise.

Grenadier Pond Weir and Shoreline

Further to the Operations meeting, Jennifer Gibb will determine who (TRCA?) is responsible for adjusting the weir to control seasonal water levels at Grenadier Pond, and also for maintaining and advising on the management of the shoreline of the pond. Concern was expressed about erosion and spread of the path along the east shore.

Purple Martin House Cleaned for Spring

At the meeting with Park Operations, we were advised that staff would not be cleaning the purple martin house. Two volunteers, Ray Bielaskie and Michael White, have been recruited for the job. They lowered the house, scraped out the remains of nests, and washed the whole house down with a weak solution of bleach before reassembling and re-erecting it to await next spring's migrants.

Signage

A prototype of an interpretive sign for Grenadier Pond has been reviewed and passed back to City staff for revisions and production. It is intended to serve as a model for a number of additional signs around the pond.

Tree and Shrub Planting

Forestry is planning to plant about 10 native trees per year (many of them black oaks) in manicured areas. Staff will also be planting woody material on the Parkside Drive rehabilitation site this fall.

Website

The website www.highparknature.org has been given a fresh new look. Thanks to graphic designer Oksana Kulczycky for the banner design and other helpful tips.

Anyone who would like to submit photos to add new images to the site or improve on existing ones is welcome to contact mail@highparknature.org. Written submissions are also welcome, including personal reminiscences or reflections as well as fact-based articles.

Volunteer Stewards

During 2010 over 500 participants have provided more than 1500 hours planting, weeding, seed collecting and cleaning, attending educational sessions and managing the spring native plant sale. The final work session is on Sunday, Nov. 28, followed by a pot-luck lunch.

Other Updates

Starting in January, **garbage pickup** will be done by regular City-wide crews, so all bins will be placed next to roadways.

Local author Bianca Lakoseljac is launching her collection of short stories, **Bridge in the Rain**, linked by an inscription on a bench in High Park, on Tuesday, Nov. 30 at Ben McNally's Books. See this [article](#) and [poster](#).

Jane Schmidt, Sharon Lovett and Karen Yukich are representing High Park at a regional meeting of **Ontario Nature** on Saturday, Oct. 30.