

UPDATE

January 2020

Prescribed Burn

A prescribed burn is planned for spring 2020. Leslie Gooding and Karen Yukich participated in the Technical Advisory group tour of proposed burn sites in October. 3 sites are proposed for the 2020 prescribed burn in High Park: 1E East, 9B and 9A. Some points discussed on the burn tour: leave refuge areas for insects so they can recolonize the burned area, and continue to remove sugar maples and other undesirable woody plants.

Phragmites Treatment

In fall 2019 Toronto Region Conservation did some manual spading of phragmites rhizomes in wet areas, plus removal of previously treated dead standing phragmites in dry areas. They will be assessing the results in 2020.

Aerial Spraying

The NEC had expressed concern that aerial spraying for caterpillars of the invasive gypsy moth in High Park would negatively impact some non-target lepidoptera species (butterflies and moths). On October 24 Leslie Gooding and Karen Yukich met with Forest Health Care and other Urban Forestry staff, and two experts in forest pest management (Sandy Smith and Chris MacQuarrie). We discussed the lack of advance communication or consultation, and agreed that research is needed to explore exactly which species might be impacted by the spray. It was clarified that the spraying does not give total coverage and does not affect the understory (based on previous tests); and that natural pathogens are generally not effective enough to be relied on for gypsy moth control in heavy outbreak years. It was pointed out that regular forests differ in many ways from urban forests (e.g. not large stands with just a few species, more urban stresses), so a natural control that works in one may not work in the other.

Some specific action items include: try to get a student/intern (or other person) to match known Lepidoptera in High Park with the life history timing of gypsy moths; coordinate the invasive species management carried out by Forestry in the Black Oak Savannah and Woodlands (e.g. location and timing of burns) with forest pest management planning, preferably within one overall integrated pest management plan (so for example, a refuge area in a particular year's burn plan is not sprayed for gypsy moths in the same season).

The aerial spray of spring 2019 was the first ever in High Park, and is not expected to be needed again in the near future.

Proposed Viewing Node

The Natural Environment Committee has written to the City and the TRCA to recommend strongly that a suggested viewing node structure not be built at Grenadier Pond. We are pleased to report that this project will not be proceeding.

High Park Inventory

In 2018 the TRCA conducted an inventory of High Park's flora and fauna. Preliminary results show some new discoveries of native plant species as well as some loss or decline of others. The TRCA's full report will be available after the January 12 presentation – see below.

High Park Stewards

In 2019 over 280 volunteers contributed 575+ hours to restoration field work. They planted 1779 native plants and removed countless quantities of weeds! For a more detailed report, please see the [High Park Stewards Summary 2019](#) provided by Jaclyn Scobie of Urban Forestry.

The makeover and ongoing maintenance of the Boulevard Beds continued through spring, summer and fall 2019.

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

NOTE: The Stewards' first winter lecture will feature the results of the recent TRCA inventory of High Park. There will also be a presentation of Urban Forestry work in High Park, a preview of 2020 plans, and information on the Vegetative Monitoring Protocol that began in 2019. This event is co-sponsored by the Natural Environment Committee and is in lieu of our regular committee meeting.

How Healthy is High Park?

Sunday, January 12, 10.30am – 12.30pm
at the Howard Park Tennis Club, 430 Parkside Drive.

Presentation by TRCA and Urban Forestry

High Park has had over 25 years of habitat restoration work to preserve and enhance the Black Oak Savannah and Woodlands. The pressures on the park from recreational use and development are in direct opposition to this endeavour. How is the park standing up and what is the outlook for the future?