

FOREST PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mission Statement

- To engage Maple Grove residents, academic institutions, volunteer groups, and government agencies in appreciating, understanding, protecting, and restoring the natural values and integrity of the forest and open space system, and
- To pursue additional linkages to increase the connectivity of open spaces.

Goal and Objectives

Goal

- To preserve and maintain the forest and open space lands for future generations.

Objectives

Citizen Enjoyment and Quality of Life

- To encourage the general public to experience the natural environments of the open space system.

Land Protection and Management

- To continue to protect, restore, connect, and manage the network of forests, wetlands, and open spaces.

Nature Education

- To provide opportunities for visitors to learn from their experiences with nature.
- To provide nature and wildlife study opportunities while respecting the fragile character of these environments.

The mission statement, goals and objectives are the same today as they were in 2002 when they were established.

It seems appropriate at this point to further refine the Westwood plan by establishing ten (10) strategies in order to achieve the stated goals and objectives.

Attached are the general strategies along with specific management elements relating to those strategies.

FOREST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Strategies

- A.
 1. Manage invasive species
 2. Establishment of a reforestation program
 3. Establishment of a prairie restoration program
 4. Confirmation of regeneration progress
 5. Management of woodchip trail system
 6. Construction of structures
 7. Establishment of a signage system

8. Establishment of wetland/hydrology controls to avoid possible detriment to vegetative areas
9. Prohibit any use of the area that is inconsistent with the established goal of the forest and open space property
10. Provide for a means of wildlife management as governed by local and state regulations

A.1. Manage Invasive Species

a. Priority 1

Allocate sufficient resources to achieve elimination of buckthorn and prickly ash in all areas labeled Control #1 on Exhibits 1 and 3 of the Interim Management Plan, which is currently underway for buckthorn and other areas labeled Control #1 on Exhibit 1 of the Interim Management Plan within a 5-year period. Since these areas are highly ranked Maple/Basswood forests with extensive existing overstory trees, reforestation is not required at this time.

b. Priority 2

Following completion of eradication in Control Area #1 areas, proceed to eliminate reed canary grass infestation in the Reed Canary Grass control area shown on Exhibit 1 within 1 year. The ditch block shown on Exhibit 1 should be reviewed for viability. If viable, apply for grants to aid in ditch block establishment.

c. Priority 3

Proceed to eradicate buckthorn and prickly ash in Control Area #2 followed by Control Area #3 on Exhibits 1 and 3 within a 4-year period.

- d. Continue management on an ongoing basis to stop buckthorn, prickly ash and reed canary grass invasion in all areas.
- e. Review, on an annual basis, possible management plan adjustments by a qualified forest management specialist and the Arbor Committee.

A.2. Establishment of a reforestation program

- a. Pursue a reforestation program in area S 19 (2 locations) on Exhibit 3 using only native plant materials
- b. To minimize destruction of tree seedlings/saplings from wildlife, provide a means to protect individual trees from wildlife.

A.3. Establishment of a prairie restoration program

- a. Pursue a prairie restoration program in area N26 on Exhibit 1 and S8 and S26 on Exhibit 3.
- b. Conduct prescribed burns in all 3 areas every 3 to 5 years

A.4. Confirmation of regeneration progress

- Observation and analysis of native species seedlings and saplings in the forest understory which indicates the potential of a healthy forest community which will replicate itself. Said observation, analysis and confirmation shall be provided by a forest resource specialist. In areas where regeneration is not progressing, determine cause and obtain recommendations to advance the regeneration process, which may include, but not be limited to, control burning or deer exclusion.

A.5. Management of woodchip trail system

- a. Maintain existing woodchip trails using GPS, if feasible, to establish and re-establish locations.
- b. Following the invasive species eradication program, evaluate expansion of the trail system by adding the loop around the Otterness property followed by the trails to the property previously owned by Ethel Acres, which should also be a looped trail as opposed to a dead-end trail. Said trail should be located within the zone identified as N14 on Exhibit 1. Both trails shall be evaluated as to their feasibility.
- c. All trails shall be wood chipped pedestrian trails with no motor vehicles or horses allowed (except City maintenance vehicles used exclusively to maintain the forest and open space area).
- d. Eliminate foot paths in all non-designated trail locations.

A.6. Construction of Structures

- a. No public or private buildings of any kind shall be allowed.
- b. Benches may be allowed in selected areas where they will not lead to the degradation of the immediate area.
- c. Maintain the existing non-hard surface parking area at the entrance to the existing north trail off of Vicksburg Lane by means such as re-grading, adding class 5 gravel as needed or by implementing other permeable surface options.

A.7. Establishment of a signage system

- a. Erection of signage unique to the forest area:
 1. At trail entrances off of Vicksburg Lane and at trail entrances adjacent to residential developments -
 - Stay on wood chip trails
 - Description of the history and uniqueness and sensitive nature of the area
 2. Along trails, at various locations to delineate trail route
 3. Reminding forest area visitors to collect and remove dog waste

A.8. Establishment of wetland/hydrology controls to manage invasive species common to wetland areas and to maintain the natural ecosystems of the entire forest preservation area.

A.9. Continued prohibition any use of the area that is inconsistent with the goal of preservation and maintenance of the land for future generations.

- Review, on a case by case basis, all activities that take place within the forest preservation area not specifically identified within this management plan. Said activities to be reviewed by a consulting forester and the Arbor Committee.

A.10. Provide for a means of wildlife management as governed by local and state regulations.

- In the effort to promote regeneration of native plant materials, allow non-firearm hunting of deer and control of other wildlife as needed.