

UPDATE

April 3, 2012

Prescribed Burn March 21, 2012

The March 21st prescribed burn involved two sites totalling 3.4 ha (smaller than last year). It was conducted faster, to encourage upwards smoke dispersal. Special measures were taken to protect oak saplings in the area. This marks the 10th burn carried out in High Park since the initial test burns in 1997 and 1998. Background information about the burn is posted on the [City's website](#). See also media coverage links posted on [our website](#).

Planting Plans

This year's plantings will focus on three main areas: 1) north-east savannah (to displace brome grass), 2) north-west corner near permanent fence (to enhance forest edge), and 3) near Centre Road/ Spring Creek (to establish the understory). Some in-fill planting will also be carried out.

Last year's post-fire plantings and the restoration plantings at the former BMX site seem to be doing well.

Management Plan, Invasive Species & Trails

This is the 10th anniversary of the publication of the High Park Woodland & Savannah Management Plan. Over the years, staff have found that efforts to control invasive plants (focused mainly on the park's higher quality areas) have taken up more of their resources than first anticipated.

Updating this plan would need to include a proper review of trails, which is not feasible in the short-term, and the status of the proposed Master Plan study is uncertain.

The discussion of these challenges led to the idea of setting up a volunteer-led monitoring program to provide information on trends and patterns in park usage, so that the City would be better able to allocate resources to respond to concerns. Katarina Marjan volunteered to work on establishing and coordinating such a program.

In addition, Linda Read is heading up a new stewardship subgroup of trained volunteers who will work on invasive plant removal outside of regularly scheduled VSP events.

Grenadier Pond Interpretive Signs Project

Seven signs are now ready to go to tender and one more has been submitted for layout. Along with the prototype sign already constructed, this totals 9 signs to be installed this year. Subjects include: herons, dabbling ducks, Canada geese, cormorants, dragonflies, raccoons, phragmites, cattails, and the geological forces that led to the formation of Grenadier Pond.

Most of these signs are being produced with support from TD Friends of the Environment. A second grant application will be made for additional signage this spring.

Other Issues in and near the Park

At the Natural Environment Committee meeting of April 3, action steps were proposed for a number of park issues:

- **Nesting area protection:** concerns re inappropriate activity (including fishing) in the marsh at the north end of Grenadier Pond.
- **Weir operation** at south end of Grenadier Pond needs to be reactivated.
- **Repair of walkway** along northeast side of Grenadier Pond: a temporary step has been taken (gravel) but a more sustainable and environmentally appropriate long-term solution is needed.
- **Condo development** on Bloor St., opposite the park: educational efforts could mitigate the impact of the associated incremental park activity by developing awareness among the new condo residents of the park's vulnerable natural heritage.

In addition, we noted the ongoing efforts to save High Park Zoo and to rebuild and enhance the Jamie Bell Adventure Playground. (See links on our website.)

High Park Stewards Events & Plant Sale

A series of interesting, well-attended indoor educational sessions was held over the winter on the following subjects: ecology, good stewardship practices, volunteer training, and plant identification.

Preparations are now underway for the annual VSP native plant sale, Sunday, May 6, 11 am to 2 pm at the High Park Greenhouse. Check the plant list [here](#).

High Park Nature Website

Website traffic increased in March, particularly relating to the prescribed burn. Please help spread the word about our website – for example, to any teachers who use the park.

Volunteers Needed:

- To liaise with those doing nature/environment-based research in the park, for purposes of facilitating it and posting results on our website.
- To liaise with artists/writers doing work relating to the park, to showcase their work on our website.

If you are interested, please contact mail@highparknature.org.