



**Minutes
Minnetonka Park Board
Wednesday, February 2, 2022**

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Park board members present: Korey Beyersdorf, James Durbin, Chris Gabler, David Ingraham, Ben Jacobs, Katie Semersky, Isabelle Stroh and Chris Walick.

Staff members in attendance: Darin Ellingson, Kathy Kline, Matt Kumka, Kelly O'Dea, Sara Woeste and Leslie Yetka.

Gabler called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

3. Reports from Staff

Recreation Director, Kelly O'Dea reported that there was an addendum. He introduced Matt Kumka, the new Park and Trail Project Manager who replaced Carol HejlStone. He also introduced Isabelle Stroh, the new student park board member.

4. Approval of Minutes

Walick moved, Jacobs seconded a motion to approve the meeting minutes of Jan. 5, 2022 as submitted. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

5. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda

There were none.

6. Special Matters

Angela Moreira and Heather Holm represented the Friends of Purgatory Park and presented on the restoration at Purgatory Park. Their presentation is attached to the end of the minutes.

Ingraham questioned if staff knew about their funding requests because he didn't see a dollar amount in the material. If the answer is yes, he asked if the dollar amount required the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) or if it would fit within the operating budget. He was really impressed with the work they have done and congratulated them on a good effort.

Holm answered that the work plan was emailed to the park board and it included details about the expenditures. The expenditures included seeds and some contractor work. There were also some new invasive plants introduced with the stair project that required very specific herbicides. Financially they have asked for a few thousand dollars out of the regular annual budget. The area that they have been working on is high-priority and in the future will need prescribed burns and other work done by outside contractors.

Natural Resources Manager, Leslie Yetka added that they received these proposals and will talk about it later in the agenda. When staff reviews the requests they will look at what is being requested in terms of funds, staff time and how it relates to what they already have in their operating budgets. Staff is aware of their request and she thinks it could be incorporated into their existing budgeting. If it is a really significant amount, it might get moved to a capital improvement project.

Sabrina Harvey represented the Friends of Hilloway Park and presented on the restoration at Hilloway Park. The presentation is attached to the end of the minutes.

Gabler thanked Harvey for the presentation and he appreciated all the work that was done.

7. Business Items

A. POST Plan Update

Assistant Recreation Director, Sara Woeste gave the report.

Semersky thought it was an awesome initiative and a tremendous comprehensive document that they have been able to give feedback on every step of the way and she really appreciated that. A document this long definitely deserves an executive summary for future stakeholders. She thought what Woeste presented to them is kind of a good start of an executive summary; to have a 10-15 page summary. She questioned how they should be thinking about the timeframe for the priority initiatives; is it a one year or three to five year list of priorities. She asked what the criteria was to prioritize those particular initiatives on the list. She appreciated the question about active versus passive recreation because the names are not intuitive and the definitions are helpful. Overall, she really appreciated the project to really solidify the future for our parks.

Woeste responded that this is a 15 to 20 year plan so the priorities would be:

- High priority: first five years
- Medium priority: 5-10 years
- Low priority: 10-15+ years

They prioritized them by looking at the feedback and seeing what the highest amount of information received was. One of the highest priorities was master planning, so they need to master plan some of these parks. They did this as a team, there was a Technical Advisory Committee with the consultants that reviewed all the information and made decisions based on the feedback they heard. Now that the information is out there, it can be changed and staff can hear more input on it. If people don't agree with those priorities, staff is willing to listen.

Ingraham was very impressed with where they came out and was very appreciative of the degree in which community feedback was incorporated into the plan. He really liked the classifications. He reviewed the prior set of classifications where there were probably twice as many classifications of parks; this is simplified and easier to understand. He also appreciated staff going through and adding classifications to every park. Previously, about a third of the parks had no classification so he thought that was great. He liked the glossary a lot in terms of feedback on active versus passive. He thought that was a good

definition and he thought some of the other definitions added in the glossary should be helpful to people reviewing the plan. One thought is when a plan is this comprehensive and big, it can easily go into a binder or saved in a file on the computer and you don't really go back to it. He encouraged them to schedule a review at one of their meetings each year so they can look at the priorities and initiatives at a high-level. This way they can review how they are doing with the high and medium priorities and confirm that the low priorities are still low. He thinks that would be a good way to keep the plan alive and very current. He congratulated staff on a good job.

Gabler thanked them for putting in a definition for diversity, equity and inclusion because they spent a lot of time on that at a previous meeting and nobody really had a definition for it. He thought the whole thing was great and liked the idea of an executive summary; he likes to read bullet points and cliff notes and then look for what he is interested in. There was a lot to be proud of there.

Woeste thanked Ingraham who was on the Technical Advisory Committee. He gave some great input and put a lot of time into it. She appreciated that and she does like the idea of an executive summary. Woeste reminded them that they won't see edits at the next meeting. Staff will wait to take all the public comment and then edits will be made.

B. Volunteer Restoration Project Review Process

Yetka gave the report.

Gabler really liked the evaluation sheet and scoring. He thought it will be really helpful especially when you bring it to the park board.

Walick was happy that they are getting a way to organize and streamline these things. There is a lot of passion out there and it can be very overwhelming when you have a lot of contacts and ideas coming in. It's nice to have something that collects all the important information and then lets you work with it. He was glad this was happening.

Stroh thought it sounded amazing to streamline everything. She asked if a project was approved or goes along with the city plan if there would be a question that asked if anyone in the group has past experience in an activity that they want to pursue. For example, if they want to do something with the turf, do they have a background in botany?

Yetka answered that it isn't incorporated in the application now. They didn't really think along that line mostly because they would expect to work pretty closely with whomever is applying, which could be a friends group, representative or eventually a trained habitat steward. They anticipate that they would know what their background is and ensure that they have the right background.

Harvey is one of the people that have submitted a draft plan already. She questioned if they should try and put their plan into this format or if staff will work with them.

Yetka doesn't see a need to go back and put everything into a template. Staff will work with you this time just to ensure that all of the items that are in the template are also represented in your submittal. If there are things missing, staff will work with you on getting those.

Harvey asked when the training for the habitats steward program would be more defined.

Yetka answered that their goal is to kind of rollout a pilot training for habitat stewards this spring and it will be on a limited basis. They are developing curriculum right now for that. Some of that curriculum will be appropriate for sort of the general volunteers that might want to do some type of activity in a park but need a little bit of onboarding with understanding safety concerns, etc. There will also be a curriculum that would be tailored just to a steward that would be much more involved in terms of understanding their parks and local habitat, restoration activities and best management practices.

Durbin appreciated the application and scoring and thinks it will help staff manage the increased demand. It will help you stay ahead by making things fair and having a transparent process for managing limited funds and limited staff resources.

C. Consideration of 2022 Park Board Strategic Plan

O'Dea gave the report.

Walick liked the addition of the special projects document. He thinks that will be interesting to look at especially with the new forms coming for the projects. He thought everything looked great.

Gabler liked the changes that were made because he thought those were changes they have talked about throughout the years.

Harvey asked when people would get feedback on whether their submitted park projects are approved, need rework or are denied.

Yetka answered that there is a timeline on the application information sheet. Staff will review applications and then notify the applicants if they are approved, need additional draft requirements or are declined on February 15. The final approval or decline is on March 15.

Semersky liked all the changes. She noticed that the skate park was pulled out from the POST Plan but assumed the reason was because it is funded. She questioned if there is anything else they want to remove from the POST Plan or if it is too early to do that.

O'Dea replied that once the POST Plan is approved, they will look at the initiatives and come back to the park board in June with the CIP. That would be the time when the board will review some of these and help prioritize them.

Woeste liked what Semersky was thinking but she doesn't think the timing is right. This document gets approved in the next month but the POST Plan won't be approved until April. She thinks there is a general statement in there for implementation of those priorities and that is probably the best language to use at this time.

8. Park Board Member Reports

There were none.

9. Information Items

2021 Athletic Field Use

O'Dea gave the report.

2021 Gray's Bay Marina Summary

O'Dea gave the report.

Cullen Preserve Restoration Update

Yetka gave the report.

Ingraham commented that there is a footnote on the bottom of the Gray's Bay Marina chart where it says the estimated 2003-2021 budget escrow amount would be \$365,000 and today it said over \$800,000. He questioned if that was their intention, in other words, he questioned if we are half a million dollars more than what we thought we would be or need to be.

O'Dea responded that it unfortunately predates him back to 2003. Staff probably looked 10 to 15 years out when they were looking at the plan for the marina. He wasn't sure if they estimated that we would have to replace equipment earlier or if they just didn't think that we would make as much money as we currently have. This year, we made \$50,000 and part of that is when we look at our gas prices, we have to compare our gas prices to others on the lake. We don't necessarily raise gas prices to make money; they have to see what is comparable. It is hard to say if it was underestimating the revenues or if they thought expenditures would come earlier.

Ingraham was just curious because he wasn't sure if we have an estimate of what we think the escrow needs might be, and if we are reserving it so there is a means by which the city can redirect excess escrow funds to other projects or not.

Durbin commented they have had presentations on this for several years. The building structure needs to be replaced eventually so they are forecasting all of that heavy infrastructure. At prior meetings staff explained that it was so they would have enough funds if there was actually a catastrophic failure of the building site or major equipment to be able to cover it. They have been building up the funds.

Ingraham thought that was helpful. He was only curious because he is a fan of having a good size reserve so you don't disrupt your ordinary stuff. The way it showed up on the bottom of the screen raised the question to him.

Durbin asked if the person that usually gives the update could send them a supplemental blurb on the state of the escrow as kind of an update for them.

O'Dea responded that Mike Pavelka is the one that usually presents on the marina. He is out of town this evening so he wasn't able to present. He can definitely get them some more information about the escrow fund. At some point we will be seeing a CIP page for Gray's Bay Marina and we'll begin to see some expenditures coming in the next five years.

10. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

O'Dea gave the report.

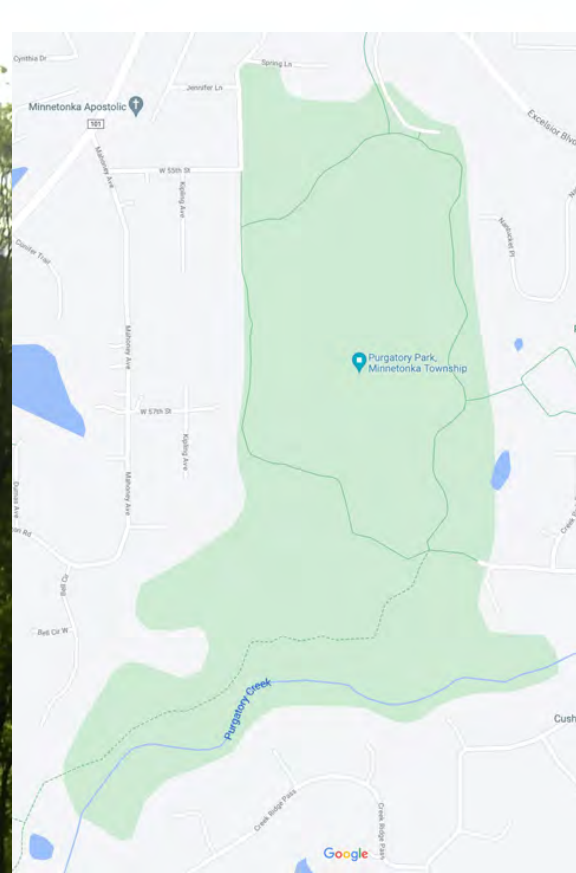
11. Adjournment

Walick moved, Ingraham seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

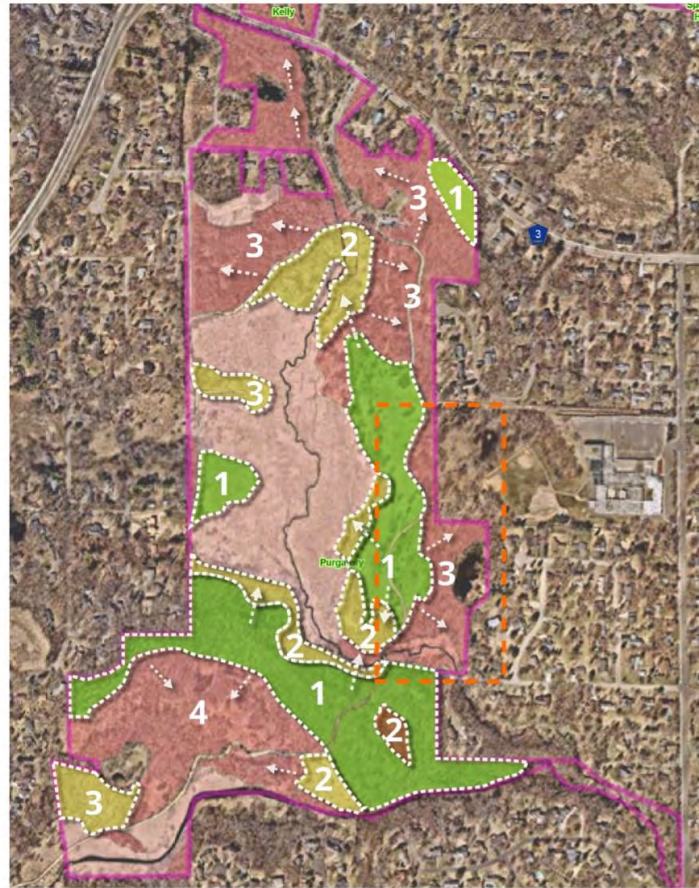
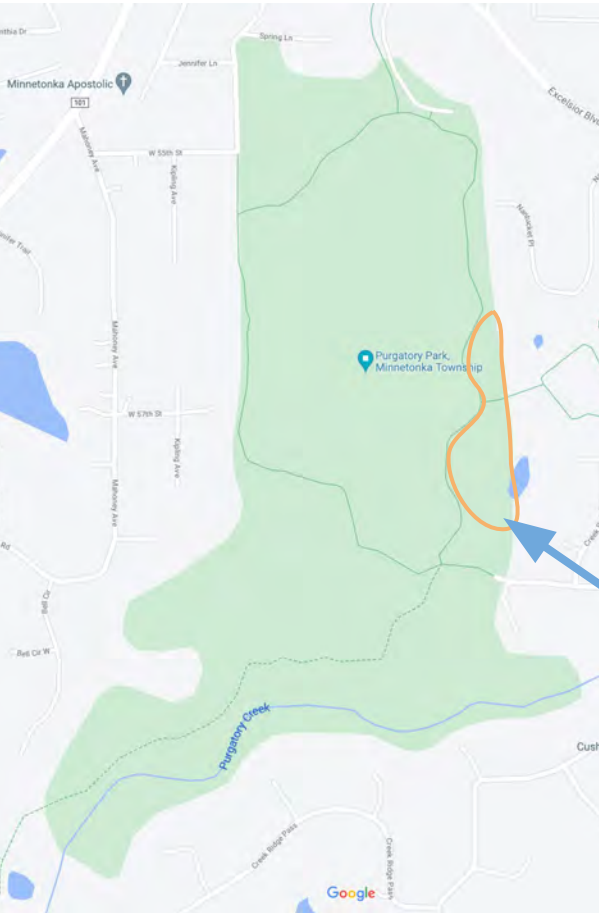
Kathy Kline

Kathy Kline
Recreation Administrative Coordinator



Friends of Purgatory Park belongs to the umbrella nonprofit organization **Friends of Minnetonka Parks**





Natural Resources Master Plan (2021)

Restoration Priority Map

1 (Green)
High Priority

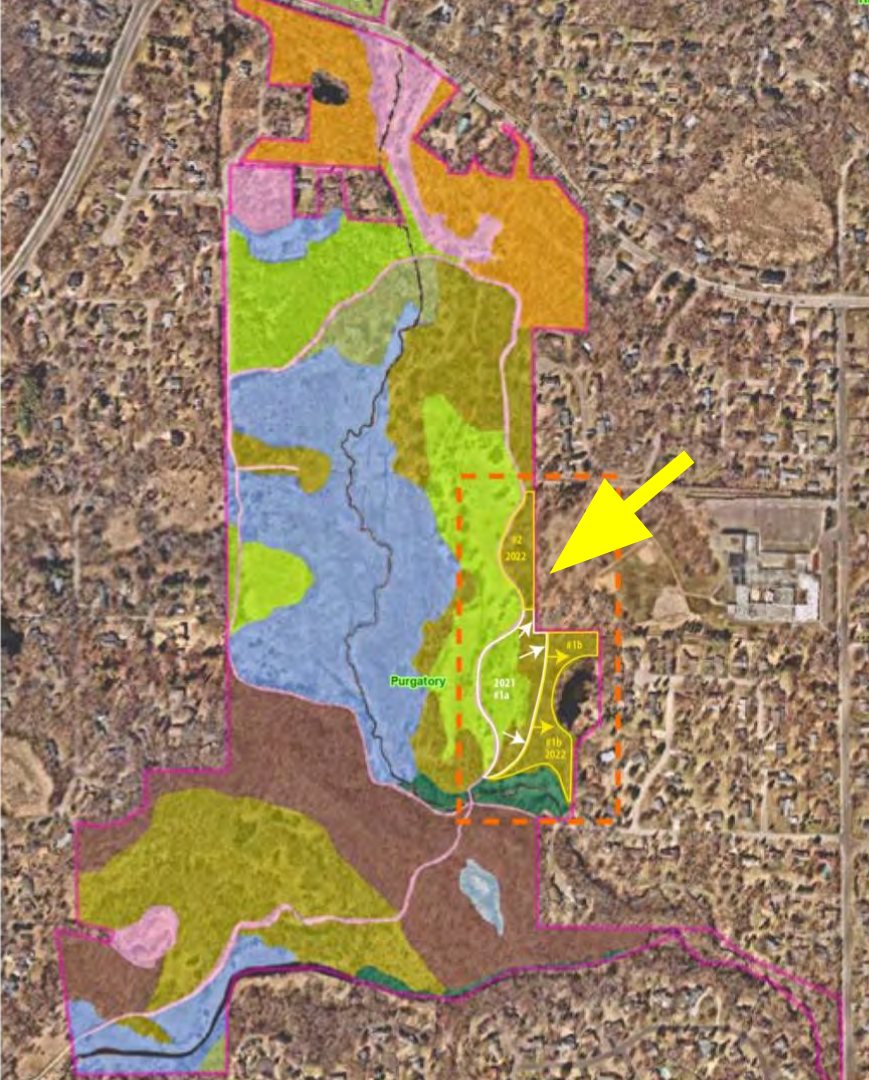
2, 3 (Yellow)
Medium

3, 4 (Pink) Low

Natural Resources Master Plan (2021)

Target Plant Communities

- Grassland - Prairie
- Oak Savanna



Prairie Remnant Woody Encroachment and Invasive Species Management



Prairie Remnant Woody Encroachment and Invasive Species Management





Friends of
Purgatory
Buckthorn
'Blitz'
October 9,
2021

More than
25 people
attended!





Snow Seeding the North Slope with Grasses



Little bluestem, side-oats grama, blue grama, prairie brome,
black-eyed Susan

The Friends contributed approximately 325 hours
between October 5th and December 10th, 2021
 $325 \times \$28.54 = \9275 value!





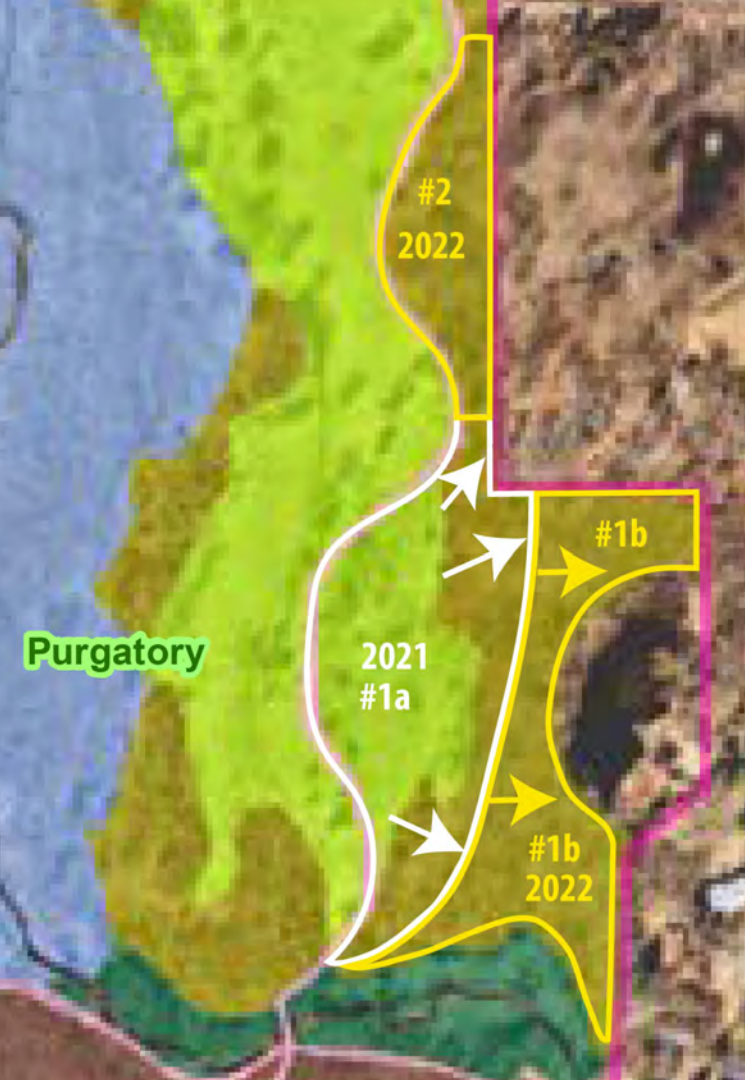
The Friends have a committed group of volunteers that
are keen to continue restoring the prairie in 2022.

Natural Resources Master Plan (2021) Target Plant Communities

Friends of Purgatory 2022 Work Plan

- 1) high ecological quality
(only prairie remnant in the City);
- 2) highly visible site located next to the maintained trail; and
- 3) proximity to the Scenic Heights School Forest savanna restoration to connect habitats.

-  Grassland - Prairie
-  Oak Savanna





Area 1b

Oak Savanna

Area 1a

Grassland - Prairie



Area 2

Oak Savanna

Area 1b

Oak Savanna

Area 1a

Grassland - Prairie

Priority Area 2



March - April: Remove Eastern red cedars to prepare for prescribed burn

Autumn: Remove buckthorn, honeysuckle, and Siberian elm



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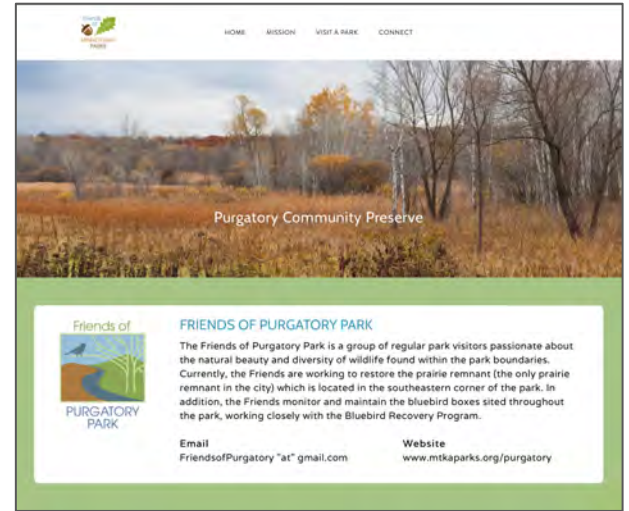
Website

www.MtkaParks.org/Purgatory

Email

FriendsofPurgatory@gmail.com

Thank you!



Hilloway Community Preserve





2021 Accomplishments

May

**Valerian
(7)**

June

**Garlic
mustard/
Narrowleaf
bittercress
(4)**

July

**Park tour
(13)**

Oct

**Buckthorn
(30)**

Nov

**Buckthorn
(16)**
**Doggy station
(city)**

Dec

**33 red pines
removed by
city and
milled into
lumber
(city)**

**Snowseeding
(2)**

1st newsletter

A photograph of a forest path. The path is a narrow dirt trail that curves through a wooded area. On the left side of the path, there are lush green trees and grass, indicating a spring or summer setting. On the right side, the trees have turned a deep orange and red, suggesting an autumn setting. The lighting is soft, and the overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

2021 Accomplishments

- 6 volunteer events
- 35 individual volunteers
- 132 volunteer hours
- $132 * 28.54 = \$3894.28$ value



Buckthorn Forest – 10/5/21



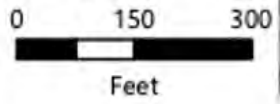
Buckthorn Forest – 12/15/21



Wood Rill SNA

From 2021 NRMP:

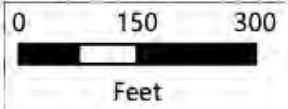
Target Plant Community



- Fen
- Deep Marsh
- Wet Meadow
- Mixed Coniferous Forest
- Maple - Basswood Forest
- Oak Forest
- Oak Savanna



**From 2021 NRMP:
Restoration Priority**



**Red – area cleared by
FoMP 2021**

2022 Proposed Work Plan
Area 1: (changed since draft):
Mixed coniferous forest

FoMP:

Conduct invasive pull events in spring/summer (garlic mustard, narrowleaf bittercress, etc.)

Conduct 1 or more BBs in fall.

City:

Continue to thin pine forest.



**2022 Proposed Work Plan
Area 2: (changed since draft)
Maple Basswood/Oak Savanna**

FoMP:

Monitor cleared area for
invasives.

If city able to mow, we'll work
with them to maintain. If city
not able to mow/hold 1 or
more BBs in fall to expand area.

City:

Forest mow/blade cut to
expand **cleared area**.



A scenic forest path with green trees on the left and autumn-colored trees on the right. The path is a narrow dirt trail that curves through the woods. The trees on the left are lush green, while the trees on the right have turned vibrant orange and red. The lighting is soft, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting.

Thank you!

www.minnetonkaparks.org/hilloway

www.facebook.com/hillowaypark

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