



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

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ENTER AGENDA SECTION HERE- *Chair McKinley*

OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

At the January 16 meeting, the NRCB decided to review the Open Space Management Plan. Chair McKinley and Boardmember Truchon are going through the plan to determine what has been done and what has yet to be done. The NRCB will then go through the plan section by section.

Below is Chair McKinley's report. Boardmember Truchon will present hers verbally at the meeting.

Chair McKinley:

OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT PLANS UPDATE

Site #2: Pioneer Park-Designated as a Special Use Park and defined as parkland obtained & maintained for its environmental resources. The first 40 A. parcel was purchased in 1962, a second 40 A. parcel was added in 1972, and the third 20 A. was purchased in 2000. A Natural Resources Inventory study was conducted in the 1990's, which found a large population of twisted yellow-eyed grass and several other rare or endangered native plants being overrun by invasive species. The western half of the acreage is wetland and the eastern half is mostly wooded upland with some pockets of wetland.

Restoration of the degraded wetlands was carried out by a professional environmental service, and in 2005 a boardwalk was constructed across the wetland to connect to the neighborhood on the NW side of the park. An extensive paved trail system, along with several

wood chip trails and bridges across the drainage ditch allow public access for visitors to fully enjoy this special place.

The wetland restoration project was successful, but will need continued monitoring to prevent regrowth of the invasives. The woodland areas were heavily infested with buckthorn. Extensive targeted removal projects have been carried out over several years, and much of the buckthorn has been removed, but this too will require vigilant oversight to prevent its return.

Site #3: Lochness Park-another Special Use Park of 90A. that features a man-made 80 foot high hill overlooking a 20A. man-made lake. This site has been city property since 1971. Along with an extensive paved trail from the parking lot to around the hill & back past the lake, it features a fishing dock, 2 shelters for gatherings, and a disc golf course that was added in 2009.

The Management Plan called for establishing a native prairie on the top of the hill. This will require removal of the present non-native grasses, followed by several years of follow-up attention. This plan was given a low priority and has not been addressed. In addition, restoring the wet forests on the acreage was given a low priority too.

Site #5: 131st Ave.-a 10A. parcel purchased in 2004 with the Bond Fund. Essentially, a narrow rectangle between 2 privately owned lands. Unfortunately, oak wilt was discovered early on and has been an ongoing problem, esp. since both sides are also wooded & have oak wilt occurring. Initially heavily wooded with red oak, many infected trees have been removed, and a logging trail was established which has since been upgraded to a wide woodchip trail. Public Works has replanted open areas with different tree species. Buckthorn was also a big problem, and removal has been a high priority. For now, the parcel remains in the need of continual monitoring for control of the oak wilt and the buckthorn.

Sites #8-9-10-11: Historically, these sites were pastured farmland, and mostly acquired by the City through tax forfeiture. Essentially the sites are contiguous and management is recommended to treat the sites as one unit. The highest priority is elimination of the buckthorn in the wet meadow of Site #9 and elimination of invasive brush by controlled burnings in all the sites. A third priority is protection of and restoration of the lakeshores in Sites #10 & 11.

The Open Spaces at Kane Meadows are attached to the neighborhood park of the same name. The Open Space is approx. 125 A. stretching from 85th Ave northeasterly to 93rd Ave with a paved trail through the entire parcel. This trail system receives heavy usage by walkers and bikers enjoying the abundant & varied wildlife and the lush growth of the plant species. As in Pioneer Park & the Blaine Preserve, scattered areas of rare native plants have been found.

Site #12-Lever St: This 11.7A. parcel was purchased by the Open Space Bond Fund in 2007 and an addendum management plan was produced in 2009 by Great River Greening. This parcel is completely surrounded by private ownership. An easement for public access is to be granted when development of the private land takes place. Its attractive feature is a 4 A. man-made pond of open water surrounded by a cattail marsh and highly popular with waterfowl.

The wooded areas are dominated by red oak and scattered patches of red maple. The most prevalent problems with this site are buckthorn in the wooded areas and Reed Canary Grass in 50% of the non-forested areas. Because no public access is available yet, restoration/management work plans have not begun.