



Lindberg Park – Prairie Trial Gardens

Native Plant Restoration

An Initiative of the Park District of Oak Park's Greening Advisory Committee

Project History

The Trial Gardens at Lindberg Park were established by the Oak Park River Forest Garden Club in 2000 to provide an area in our park system featuring native plant species for our residents to enjoy. Since installation, the two oval trial gardens and central ring garden have become dominated by a number of larger aggressive plant species (e.g. Canada thistle *Cirsium arvense*, tall goldenrod *Solidago altissima*, New England aster *Aster novae-angliae*). Canada thistle is officially classified as a noxious weed by the State of Illinois Department of Agriculture. Laws of the DOA call for control of the spread and the eradication of all noxious weeds. The diverse species mix originally planted at Lindberg Park has largely been lost.

The Park District Greening Advisory Committee (GAC), comprised of private citizens including ecologists and naturalists, has been discussing this issue for over three years. In an attempt to maintain the health of native plant communities and eliminate non-native species in the Trial Gardens, the GAC conducted prescribed burns in 2010, 2011 and 2012. In spite of the prescribed burns, invasive species remain prevalent in the Trial Gardens.

Project Summary

With the recommendation of the Greening Advisory Committee, and through a Request for Qualifications, the Park District has engaged the landscaping services of Conservation Land Stewardship, Inc. and Conservation Design Forum to restore the plantings in the Trial Gardens to recreate the desired plant diversity.

As a first step in this project, a design workshop has been held with the contractors, members of the GAC and Park District staff to develop preferred planting plans including plant species selection and proposed landscape restoration. In early May glyphosate will be used to eliminate the existing plants in the trial gardens. Glyphosate was approved by the Park Board for use where other means of weed control have failed. Glyphosate, by volume, is one of the most widely

used herbicides. Glyphosate is a broad-spectrum, systemic herbicide used to kill weeds, especially perennials, on both food and non-food crops as well as on non-crop areas such as roadsides. It is effective in killing a wide variety of plants including grasses and broadleaf and woody plants. People and animals must be kept away from sprayed areas until they dry, which generally occurs within 4 hours, depending on weather conditions. Signs will be posted for 24 hours to notify the public that spraying has occurred. The contractors plan to apply glyphosate twice within a two week period. The contractor will then proceed with the native landscape installation which will be monitored for a six-week period following their installation. The Park District has contracted with Conservation Design Forum to oversee the maintenance of this area for a three-year period.

For further information regarding the native plant restoration project at Lindberg Park visit <http://www.oakparkparks.com/AboutUs/GoGreen.htm> or contact Mike Grandy, Superintendent of Parks, at mikeg@oakparkparks.com.

Greening Advisory Committee

The Park District of Oak Park's Greening Advisory Committee is made up of citizen volunteers and Park District staff members who monitor and contribute to the Park District's environmental activities and oversee the implementation of the PDOP's Environmental Policy. For more information on this committee, contact Henrietta Yardley at (708) 725-2450 or henriettay@oakparkparks.com

Timeline

This project is expected to commence in early May and the first phase of plantings will be completed in June. Successive phasing will continue yearly as well as specialized, ongoing maintenance.