



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST STAFF REPORT

Item (4)
July 18, 2024
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	2024 Restoration and Trails Work Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Approve the 2024 Restoration and Trails Work Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

STAFF:	Lizzy Stone, Natural Resources Program Manager
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Jake Jacobson
EXHIBITS:	1. Ex1: 2024 Restoration and Trails Work Plan Maps

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

City staff reports to the Trust board each year on planned forest restoration activities and trail work in Pioneer Park and Engstrom Open Space. Work in the park is performed by professional contractors, volunteers, seasonal crew members, and Natural Resources staff. This work is guided by the Pioneer Park Forest Health Plan, the 10-Year Update to the Open Space Vegetation Management Plan, and goals associated with 2022 Parks Levy funding.

2024 RESTORATION WORK PLAN

Professional Contractors

In 2024, professional contractor work is scheduled in Engstrom Open Space, Pioneer Park NE, Pioneer Park SE and Pioneer Park NW. Contractor work will include years 1-3 of comprehensive weed removal, maintenance on areas that received comprehensive removal in the past, maintenance on last year’s plantings, and watering of last year’s plantings. This year the Natural Resources team is piloting a new approach of contracting work based on an hourly rate, in addition to the previous approach of contracting based on a lump sum cost for each project. Much of the year’s restoration work is well underway in all quadrants of the park.

- **Year 1 comprehensive weed removal** is planned on 11.8 acres: 7.4 acres of Pioneer Park NE and 4.4 acres of Pioneer Park SE. The specifications for this work include ground ivy and herbaceous weed removal, ivy rings, and invasive tree treatment. The acreages planned for 2024 well exceed the goal of 6.5 total new (year 1) acres set out in the 2022 Parks Levy.
- **Year 2 comprehensive weed removal** is planned on 10.4 acres: 1.8 acres of Engstrom Open Space, 4.0 acres of Pioneer Park NE, and 4.6 acres of Pioneer Park SE. This work is year two of a three-year comprehensive weed removal cycle.

- **Year 3 comprehensive weed removal** is planned on 8.8 acres: 3.4 acres of Pioneer Park NE and 5.4 acres of Pioneer Park SE. This is the final consecutive year of comprehensive weed removal, after which these areas will be transitioned into a 4-year maintenance cycle.
- **Invasive removal maintenance** is planned on 8.8 acres: 7.2 acres of Pioneer Park NE and 1.6 acres of Pioneer Park NW. These areas received three years of comprehensive weed removal in previous years and are due for maintenance.
- **Planting maintenance and watering** is planned for 200 trees and shrubs that were installed in Pioneer Park NE.
- **Planting** will occur along Island Crest Way in formerly mowed areas and in canopy gaps in Pioneer Park NW and Pioneer Park SE. Just over two hundred trees and shrubs have already been installed and several hundred more will be planted this fall.

CONTRACTOR WORK SUMMARIES

Site	Project Area (acres)	Restoration Task
Engstrom Open Space	1.8	Year 2 Comprehensive
Pioneer Park NE	200 plants	Planting Maintenance
Pioneer Park NE	7.4	Year 1 Comprehensive
Pioneer Park NE	4.0	Year 2 Comprehensive
Pioneer Park NE	3.4	Year 3 Comprehensive
Pioneer Park NE	7.2	Invasive Removal Maintenance
Pioneer Park NW	135 plants	Planting
Pioneer Park NW	1.6	Invasive Removal Maintenance
Pioneer Park SE	75 plants	Planting
Pioneer Park SE	4.4	Year 1 Comprehensive
Pioneer Park SE	4.6	Year 2 Comprehensive
Pioneer Park SE	5.4	Year 3 Comprehensive

Restoration Task	Acreage
Year 1 Comprehensive Weed Removal	11.8
Year 2 Comprehensive Weed Removal	10.4
Year 3 Comprehensive Weed Removal	8.8
Invasive Removal Maintenance	8.8

Natural Resources Crew

During the 2024 field season, the Natural Resources crew will continue to monitor and treat noxious weed populations on all Trust properties. Noxious weed species slated for monitoring, removal and/or treatment include spotted jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) and knotweed (*Polygonum* spp.) in the SE quadrant. Yellow

archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*) will also be treated along private property boundaries within the NW and SE quadrants. Additional efforts will be made to work with bordering neighbors to teach about yellow archangel and develop a plan for effective management. Shiny geranium (*Geranium lucidum*) infestations identified in 2020 will continue to be monitored, though they seem to have responded well to treatment and can be managed with manual methods.

The seasonal crew will continue restoration of the west border of Pioneer Park NW along 84th Ave SE, which includes planting maintenance and blackberry removal along the forest edge. The crew will water and maintain plants installed in late winter/early spring of 2024 by volunteers and Washington Conservation Corps crews. The crew will also support volunteer events by cutting back blackberry, removing ivy from technically difficult areas, watering 2023 plantings, and providing supplies for events.

The Natural Resources Crew will also be available to respond to restoration related issues and tasks as they arise throughout the field season.

Volunteer Stewardship

The Natural Resources team's volunteer coordinator will continue to hold regular volunteer events in Pioneer Park in 2024. There are currently eight trained forest stewards focused on work in Pioneer Park. These volunteers will expand areas of year 1 comprehensive weed removal in Pioneer Park NE and SE, maintain previous work areas, and install trees and shrubs in newly cleared areas of the park.

2024 TRAILS WORK PLAN

During the winter and spring, staff evaluated the condition of trails throughout Pioneer Park and Engstrom Open Space to create a draft work plan to address issues that impact the use and sustainability of the trails. As of July 2024, many trail improvements on the work plan are already in progress.

So far in 2024, the City's Natural Resources team hired three seasonal staff to help with trail repairs and maintenance projects, in addition to contracting with Washington Conservation Corps crews to conduct winter and spring trail maintenance projects. These contracted and in-house seasonal crews will work on the following trail projects on Trust property in 2024:

- Repairing Ravine Trail retaining wall.
- Re-graveling muddy areas and potholes in all three quadrants and Engstrom Open Space.
- Redirecting water off of trails to improve drainage.
- Strategic beaked hazelnut and other shrub pruning.
- Root intrusion management.
- Brushing vegetation back from trails.
- Blowing leaves off of trails.
- Other issues as they arise.

See Exhibit 1 for maps of these restoration and trails work plans.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the 2024 Restoration and Trails Work Plan.