



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST STAFF REPORT

Item 04
April 29, 2025
Special Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	2025 Restoration and Trails Work Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Approve the 2025 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:	n/a	
EXHIBITS:	1. Ex 1: 2025 Restoration and Trails Work Plan Maps	

SUMMARY

The City's Natural Resources staff developed an annual restoration and trails work plan for Pioneer Park and Engstrom Open Space. The City intends to work with professional contractors, seasonal Natural Resources staff, full-time Parks staff, and volunteers to carry out this restoration and trails work in 2025. The proposed restoration work plan will again exceed the benchmarks set out by the 2022 Parks Levy funding, continuing towards the goal of conducting at least three years of comprehensive weed removal across all of Trust properties before the end of the Parks levy in 2038. The proposed trails work plan focuses on maintaining and improving the current trail system in the parks, with an emphasis on water management, accessibility, and safety.

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 Parks 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.

DISCUSSION

2025 RESTORATION WORK PLAN

Professional Contractors

In 2025, 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 the previous year's plantings, watering

of the previous year's plantings, and installation of new plants. Restoration will begin in the spring and continue through the end of the year.

- **Year 1 comprehensive weed removal** is planned on 11.9 acres of Pioneer Park NE. The specifications for this work include ground ivy and herbaceous weed removal, ivy rings, and invasive tree treatment. The acreages planned for 2025 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 13 acres: 7.6 acres of Pioneer Park NE and 5.4 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 10.4 acres: 1.7 acres in Engstrom Open Space, 4 acres of Pioneer Park NE and 2.9 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.
- **Weed removal maintenance** is planned on 3.2 acres of Engstrom Open Space. This area last received maintenance in 2021.
- **Ivy rings** is planned on 3 acres of Pioneer Park NW in order to keep trees in this area healthy and free of weeds until we are able to enroll the area in the 3-year comprehensive weed removal cycle.
- **Planting maintenance and watering** is planned for 525 trees and shrubs that were installed in Pioneer Park SE in 2024.
- **Planting and mulching** will occur along Island Crest Way in formerly mowed areas and in canopy gaps in Pioneer Park NE. We expect that 500 trees and shrubs will be installed in these areas, in addition to roughly 400 plants that will be installed by volunteers into newly cleared areas.

CONTRACTOR WORK PLAN SUMMARY

Site	Project Area (acres)	Restoration Task
Engstrom Open Space	1.7	Year 3 Comprehensive
Engstrom Open Space	3.2	Weed Removal Maintenance
Pioneer Park NE	500 plants	Planting and mulching
Pioneer Park NE	11.9	Year 1 Comprehensive
Pioneer Park NE	7.6	Year 2 Comprehensive
Pioneer Park NE	4.0	Year 3 Comprehensive
Pioneer Park NW	3.0	Ivy Rings
Pioneer Park SE	525 plants	Planting Maintenance and Watering
Pioneer Park SE	5.4	Year 2 Comprehensive
Pioneer Park SE	4.7	Year 3 Comprehensive

Restoration Task	Acreage
Year 1 Comprehensive Weed Removal	11.9
Year 2 Comprehensive Weed Removal	13
Year 3 Comprehensive Weed Removal	10.4
Weed Removal Maintenance	3.2

Natural Resources Crew

During the 2025 field season, the Natural Resources crew will continue to monitor and manage noxious weed populations on all Trust properties. Noxious weed species slated for monitoring, removal and/or treatment include spotted jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*), knotweed (*Polygonum* spp.), and yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*) in the SE quadrant. Yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*) will also be treated along private property boundaries within the NW quadrant. In 2024, additional efforts were made to work with bordering neighbors to teach about yellow archangel and develop a plan for effective management, which will continue in 2025 where the weed persists. 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 fall and winter 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 2024 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 2025. There are currently ten 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.

2025 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.

In 2025, the City's Natural Resources team will hire three seasonal staff to help with trail repairs and maintenance projects. These contracted and in-house seasonal crews will work on the following trail projects on Trust property in 2025:

- Add non-skid surfaces and explore possibilities for handrails on stairs in Pioneer Park Northeast.
- Re-gravel muddy areas and potholes in all three quadrants and Engstrom Open Space.
- Redirect water off of trails to improve drainage.

- Strategically prune beaked hazelnut and other shrubs.
- Manage root intrusions.
- Brush vegetation back from trails.
- Blow leaves off of trails.
- Other issues as they arise.

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

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve 2025 Restoration and Trails Work Plan.