



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST STAFF REPORT

Item 3
April 16, 2026
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	2026 Restoration and Trails Work Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Approve the 2026 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:	Lisa Anderl
EXHIBITS:	1. Ex 1: 2026 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 2026. The proposed restoration work plan will again exceed the benchmarks set out by the 2022 Parks Levy funding, continuing towards the goal of carrying out 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

2026 RESTORATION WORK PLAN

Professional Contractors

In 2026, professional contractor work is scheduled in Pioneer Park NE, Pioneer Park SE and Pioneer Park NW. Contractor work will include years 1-3 of comprehensive weed removal, ivy rings, weedy tree treatment, maintenance and watering 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 8.7 acres of Pioneer Park NE. The specifications for this work include ground ivy and herbaceous weed removal, ivy rings, and weedy tree treatment. The acreages planned for 2026 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 5.5 acres of Pioneer Park NE. This work is year two of a three-year comprehensive weed removal cycle.
- **Year 3 comprehensive weed removal** is planned on 13 acres: 7.6 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.
- **Weedy tree treatment** is planned on 4.7 acres of Pioneer Park NW.
- **Ivy rings** are planned on 2.5 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 approximately 500 trees and shrubs that were installed in Pioneer Park NE in 2025.
- **Planting and mulching** Roughly 400 plants will be installed by volunteers into newly cleared forested areas.

CONTRACTOR WORK PLAN SUMMARY

Site	Project Area (acres)	Restoration Task
Pioneer Park NE	500 plants	Planting maintenance and watering
Pioneer Park NE	8.7	Year 1 Comprehensive
Pioneer Park NE	5.5	Year 2 Comprehensive
Pioneer Park NE	7.6	Year 3 Comprehensive
Pioneer Park NW	2.5	Ivy Rings
Pioneer Park NW	4.7	Weedy Tree Treatment
Pioneer Park SE	5.4	Year 3 Comprehensive

Restoration Task	Acreage
Year 1 Comprehensive Weed Removal	8.7
Year 2 Comprehensive Weed Removal	5.5
Year 3 Comprehensive Weed Removal	13
Ivy Rings	2.5
Weedy Tree Treatment	4.7

Natural Resources Crew

During the 2026 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 and 2025, 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 2026 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 and 2025 by previous seasonal crews, volunteers, and Washington Conservation Corps crews. The crew will also support volunteer events by cutting back blackberry, removing ivy from technically difficult areas, watering new 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 2026. There are currently six trained forest stewards focused on work in Pioneer Park. These volunteers will expand areas of year 1 comprehensive weed removal in Pioneer Park SE and NW, maintain previous work areas, and install trees and shrubs in newly cleared areas of the park.

2026 TRAILS WORK PLAN

In January and February of 2026, 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.

The City's Natural Resources team has hired three seasonal staff to help with trail repairs and maintenance projects. Contracted and in-house seasonal crews will work on the following trail projects on Trust property in 2026:

All Trails:

- Re-gravel muddy areas and potholes.
- Redirect water off of trails to improve drainage.
- Strategically prune beaked hazelnut and other shrubs to keep trail corridor clear.
- Manage root intrusions.
- Brush vegetation back from trails.
- Blow leaves off of trails.
- Other issues as they arise.

Engstrom Open Space

- Repair and potentially extend floating board walk through perched wetland.

- Replace slat fencing that was damaged by a fallen tree.

Pioneer Park NE

- Replace 6 rotten stair treads.
- Re-build rotten log retaining walls.
- Replace rotten timber in trail turnpikes. Back fill turnpikes with gravel to improve walking surface.
- Add non-skid surfaces to NE quadrant boardwalk.

Pioneer Park NW

- Address muddy sections by adding drain dips.

Pioneer Park SE

- Clear water bars to improve drainage.

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

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve 2026 Restoration and Trails Work Plan.