

03-17 Meeting Summary: Park Maintenance and Improvement Plan

Date & Time: 2025-03-17

Location: Mill Branch Park

Attendees: Dave Gatlin & Ivan Ivannikov

Overview

This document outlines a comprehensive plan for park maintenance and improvement, focusing on vegetation management, infrastructure development, and action items. The plan includes strategies for spraying invasive species, mowing, and maintaining trails and recreational areas. It also addresses infrastructure improvements such as gate and fence installation, pond maintenance, and trash management. The action items section consolidates tasks to ensure effective execution of the outlined strategies.

Cleanup and Spraying Strategy

- **Objective:** The primary goal is to clean up the park by spraying and removing invasive plants, maintaining trails, and preparing areas for recreational activities like disc golf.
- **Spraying Areas:**
 - Trails and fence rows need comprehensive spraying on both sides.
 - Specific attention to multiflora rose, green briars, and poison hemlock.
 - Areas around the spring house should be maintained carefully to prevent overgrowth.
 - Avoid spraying directly in water bodies like the creek.

Detailed Spraying Plan

Trail and Fence Row Maintenance

- **Spraying Requirements:**
 - Use the boom sprayer to cover trails and fence rows.
 - Focus on multiflora rose and green briars along the trails.

- Spray invasive trees and shrubs, especially those resembling Bradford pears.
- Maintain clear fence rows by spraying and eventually removing fences.

Specific Areas of Concern

- **Spring House Area:**
 - Keep the area clean and prevent overgrowth.
 - Avoid spraying too close to water sources like watercress.
- **Creek and Surrounding Areas:**
 - Spray up to the edge of the creek but not into it.
 - Remove scrub bushes and small trees to improve visibility and aesthetics.
 - Maintain a clean area for disc golf by mowing and spraying.

Invasive Plant Management

- **Poison Hemlock:**
 - Spray early before it grows large.
 - Monitor and spray as soon as it appears.
- **Invasive Trees and Shrubs:**
 - Identify and spray invasive species when leaves appear.
 - Remove dead trees and scrub bushes to maintain park aesthetics.

Maintenance and Mowing

- **Mowing Strategy:**
 - Mow flat areas and maintain clear paths for recreational use.
 - Use a brush hog to clear dense areas after spraying.
 - Wait one to two weeks after spraying before mowing to ensure effectiveness.
- **Disc Golf Course Preparation:**
 - Clear and maintain areas for disc golf to prevent overgrowth.
 - Ensure the course is free from weeds and suitable for play.

Park Maintenance and Improvement

Vegetation Management

- **Weed and Invasive Species Control**
 - A strong remedy mix is recommended to kill green briars and other invasive plants.

- Areas with dense weeds and invasive trees need significant spraying to maintain visibility and safety.
- The multiflora rose, an invasive species, requires targeted spraying, which may take a year or two to die off completely.
- The use of a boom sprayer is suggested for extensive coverage, especially along trails and around the pond.
- **Tree and Stump Management**
 - Dead trees, such as a sycamore, need removal using a bucket truck.
 - Selective tree removal is necessary to promote the growth of desirable species like walnut trees.

Infrastructure and Facilities

- **North Entrance Development**
 - Consideration of adding recreational facilities like soccer goals, but priority is on current cleanup tasks.
 - Future plans include building bathrooms, contingent on budget allocation.
- **Pond and Surrounding Area**
 - The pond requires dredging and cleanup, with coordination needed with local authorities like Game and Fish.
 - Spraying around the pond should avoid water contamination.

Mowing and Cleanup

- **Mowing Strategy**
 - Areas must be cleaned of debris, such as scrap metal and logs, before mowing to prevent equipment damage.
 - Brush hogging is recommended to clear dense vegetation and reveal hidden debris.
- **Trash and Debris Removal**
 - Accumulated trash and debris, including posts and scrap metal, need to be cleared to improve park aesthetics.
 - Excavator may be used to smooth out areas and remove large debris.

Future Planning

- **Prairie Restoration**
 - Long-term goals include replacing invasive species with native grasses through controlled burning and mowing.
- **Boundary and Access Management**
 - Installation of posts around park boundaries is planned to define areas and prevent unauthorized access.

North Entrance Cleanup

- **Primary Focus:** The team is tasked with cleaning up the north entrance area.
 - **Tasks:**
 - Use spray and brush hog to clean the area.
 - Evaluate the necessity of keeping or removing the existing posts and fencing.
 - Ensure thorough spraying up to the creek to manage multi-floral roses and green briars.

Park Signage and Trash Management

- **Park Signs:** There is a need for more park maps.
- **Trash Management:**
 - The trash at the community building is getting full.
 - Plan to acquire at least six more 55-gallon metal drums for trash collection.

Vegetation Control

- **Spraying Strategy:**
 - Use a boom sprayer to cover large areas and a wand sprayer for targeted spots.
 - Focus on eliminating thistles, poison hemlock, and multi-floral roses.
 - Spray all the way back to the fence row and up to the bluff line.
 - Special attention to areas with poison hemlock, especially near the bluff side.

Mowing and Maintenance

- **Mowing Plan:**
 - Begin mowing as far back as possible, maintaining the area up to the fence.
 - Remove dead trees and limbs, starting with spraying and then using a brush hog.

Additional Infrastructure

- **Water Meter and Doggy Water Station:**

- The water meter is in place, but the doggy water station is planned to be installed nearby.

Infrastructure and Maintenance Plans

Gate and Fence Installation

- **Plan Overview:** The plan involves installing posts to prevent vehicles from driving off the edge and potentially adding one or two gates for better access.
- **Gate Resources:** Existing gates are available on the property, but there is a preference for new, welded gates for durability.

Vegetation Management

- **Greenbriar Control:** All greenbriar needs to be sprayed, especially those on top of trees. This may require manual spraying with a wand and hose.
- **Spraying Strategy:** Spraying should be done along Highway 45 and other designated areas to clean up vegetation.
- **Poison Hemlock and Multiflora Rose:** These need to be sprayed, but coverage may vary until they leaf out more.

Rock and Landscaping Improvements

- **Rock Wall Enhancement:** The existing rock wall, built by children, needs improvement with flatter, nicer rocks for a professional appearance.
- **Rock Acquisition:** Consider purchasing rocks from a supplier near Elkins for better quality and aesthetics.

Pond and Surrounding Area

- **Pond Maintenance:** Spray around the pond bank but avoid spraying anywhere close to the water line. Trim tree limbs to allow tractor access.
- **Dead Tree Removal:** A dead tree near the pond needs to be removed for safety.
- **Spraying and Cleanup:** Spray all around the pond and dam area to clear unwanted vegetation.

Equipment and Resource Management

Culvert and Gravel Work

- **Culvert Installation:** Plan to set a culvert in a designated area, possibly using creek gravel for better appearance.

Trash and Debris Management

- **Trash Pickup:** Collect trash behind the adjacent property owner and along the fence row, even if it's not on the property.

Land Management and Maintenance

Soil Testing and Excavation

- **Soil Test:** A soil test will be conducted to assess the land condition.
- **Excavation Plans:**
 - Discussion on using an excavator to remove posts and trees, particularly a large tree that may need to be pulled out.
 - Consideration of grinding out trees if they cannot be removed easily.

Fence and Vegetation Management

- **Fence Removal:** Plans to remove the rest of the fence are underway.
- **Vegetation Control:**
 - Spraying is recommended to manage overgrown areas and facilitate easier cleanup.
 - Specific focus on areas with multiflora rose.

Brush Hogging and Invasive Species Control

- **Brush Hogging:**
 - Areas around the pond and trails will be brush hogged to manage overgrowth.
 - Emphasis on safety while operating machinery.
- **Invasive Species:**
 - Targeting black locust trees for removal due to their invasive nature.
 - General cleanup of limbs and debris is planned.

Equipment and Logistics

Spraying Schedule and Equipment Maintenance

- **Spraying Plan:**
 - Extensive spraying planned to manage vegetation.
 - Areas around roads and steep banks are prioritized.
- **Equipment Maintenance:**
 - Discussion on servicing the side-by-side vehicle and making a spare key.
 - Coordination for taking the vehicle to the shop for service.

Property and Neighbor Coordination

- **Neighbor Relations:**
 - Coordination with neighbors for spraying and maintenance activities.
 - Assurance that neighbors will not have issues with the planned activities.

Infrastructure and Safety

Drainage and Pipe Maintenance

- **Culvert and Pipe Maintenance:**
 - Plans to improve drainage and maintain pipes to ensure proper water flow.
 - Specific areas identified for maintenance to improve aesthetics and functionality.

Action Items

- Acquire necessary equipment and materials.
- Begin spraying along trails and fence rows.
- Monitor and spray poison hemlock early.
- Coordinate with Mike and the parks group for additional support.
- Schedule mowing and brush hogging after spraying.
- Plan for removal of dead trees and scrub bushes.
- Mix and apply a strong remedy to kill green briars and other invasive plants.
- Use a boom sprayer to cover trails and pond areas with herbicide.
- Remove dead sycamore tree using a bucket truck.
- Drill and treat stumps with oil for burning.
- Coordinate with Game and Fish for pond dredging.
- Clean up debris and trash before mowing.
- Use brush hog to clear dense vegetation.
- Install boundary posts around the park.
- Clean up the north entrance using spray and brush hog.
- Decide on the removal or retention of posts and fencing.
- Acquire more park maps.
- Obtain six 55-gallon metal drums for trash.
- Spray targeted areas for vegetation control.
- Start mowing and maintaining the designated areas.
- Install the doggy water station.
- Install posts and gates as planned.
- Spray greenbriar and other designated vegetation areas.
- Improve rock wall with new, flatter rocks.

- Spray and maintain the pond area.
- Pick up trash behind the adjacent property owners and along the fence row.
- Coordinate excavation for tree and post removal.
- Begin spraying to manage overgrown vegetation.
- Schedule brush hogging and removal of invasive species.
- Service the side-by-side vehicle and make a spare key.
- Coordinate with neighbors regarding spraying and maintenance activities.
- Improve drainage and maintain pipes for better water flow.