

**VILLAGE OF PLEASANT PRAIRIE
PARK COMMISSION
Village Hall, Auditorium
9915 39th Avenue
Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin 53158
Wednesday, April 4, 2007
6:00 p.m.**

A regular meeting of the Pleasant Prairie Park Commission was held on Wednesday, April 4, 2007, 6:00 p.m. Present were Rita Christiansen, Michael Russert, Alex Tiahnybok, William Mills and Kathleen Burns. Michaeline Day and Glenn Christiansen were excused. Also present were John Steinbrink, Jr., Superintendent of Parks; and Ruth Mack, Clerical Secretary.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER.**
- 2. ROLL CALL.**
- 3. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PARK COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES.**

Rita Christiansen:

I understand they are going to be approved at the next meeting.

- 4. CITIZEN COMMENTS.**

Rita Christiansen:

I understand we have a gentleman here who wanted to speak about a park. Sir, could you come up and identify yourself please, where you live and your name.

Dan White:

My name is Dan White and I'm President of the Tobin Creek Homeowners Association. I was over talking to Jean Werbie about some other items and we got onto a conversation about parks, because we are in a situation where we have at last count 85 kids in the neighborhood. There are 98 lots and it's almost completed developed out. There's 85 kids 14 and under in our neighborhood. Like most neighborhoods in Pleasant Prairie we don't have sidewalks. We just have the streets so there's no place for the kids to go except they play in the streets and then also, of course, in Tobin Creek.

So when I was talking with Jean I said is there any possibility at all of getting some dialogue going about a park? She said, well, the school district has that property just to the west of 14th Avenue and to the south of 112th Street.

Rita Christiansen:

Excuse me. John, do you have a map you could throw up for us or no?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

I do not have a map that I can have up at this time.

Rita Christiansen:

Okay, I'm sorry, sir.

Dan White:

And it's also bordered by 116th Street. So the school district owns that property. I guess originally what the plan was when they were developing Tobin Creek was that the school district was planning to put a school there and then make that a park, recreation area, and then there were going to be some paths from Tobin Creek that the kids could walk over in there to go to school and then also to play in that area. So now apparently the school district is not planning on building a school there for at least another ten years.

So when I talked with Jean Werbie she said I'm sure there are some possibilities some way. She said why don't you start out by calling the school district. I called and talked with Pat Finnemore, and Pat said, yeah, the school district would be interested in talking about that, but to have a park or recreation area there it would need to be initiated by the Village and not by the Tobin Creek Subdivision. He told me the dialogue would work from the Village talking to the school district about a land use arrangement over the next ten years, let's say, until they actually are going to build something there, a school there.

I don't know how many acres they have over there, I didn't ask him that, but we'd be looking at the possibility of maybe an area that's just right adjacent to Tobin Creek. The developer, Steven Mills, Jean said in the original agreement with the developer he's supposed to go ahead and put these walk paths from 14th Avenue and 112th Street and attach them into where that land is. She said I should come here tonight and just get it out on the table and see if that's something we could talk about, how we could go about that, if it's a possibility or what we need to do, that sort of thing.

Rita Christiansen:

John, can we put this on the agenda for next month because we really can't comment about it.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

We'll have it on the agenda for the main meeting. And during that time frame I'll have some meetings with Mr. White and we'll kind of work through some of the details of this.

Rita Christiansen:

Mr. White, thank you for bringing that to our attention and we'll look forward to seeing you next month. Thank you very much.

Dan White:

Thank you.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discuss Prairie Springs Park Natural Area Management Plan Review with Lori Artiomo, Project Biologist.

Rita Christiansen:

Lori, could you stand up and introduce yourself?

Lori Artiomo:

Sure, I'm Lori Artiomo, and I'm working on the management plan for Prairie Springs Park. We got the money to do that from a River Planning Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. So I am trying to wrap it up, but there's always more and more stuff that I learn and try to incorporate. What I've done is put together a PowerPoint presentation for you that kind of takes you through the park really. I don't know how many of you people have been out on that property and walked around, so I have some pictures of there and I'm going to describe what I've learned so far and let you guys see it.

Rita Christiansen:

John, could you give us a better description of exactly where the area is for the record please?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

The area that we're looking for is in Prairie Springs Park and it's just--

Lori Artiomo:

The next slide will show you where it is. Actually there's four because I'm showing you the park.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

It's bounded by 165, I-94 and Lake Andrea and then the Village's boundary to the north. So it's that area that's just behind or just west of Lake Andrea, between Lake Andrea, I-94 and 165. It's a beautiful area that's out there. It's very natural and very pristine.

Lori Artiomio:

And the management plan really focuses on the wetland areas which are all the purple areas. Of course, there's some upland in there, too. It doesn't really cover the couple oak wood lots that would be further to the east over there, but I do talk about them a little bit. We can just go up this way. If you could see it a little better, this area is part of a large environmental corridor that goes all along the Des Plaines and into Illinois, and it's really a pretty large environmental corridor. The reason is because of all the natural area and undeveloped area and it is along the river.

You can go to the next slide. It's also classified by SEWRPC as a Class 1 wildlife area. Again, that's because of its size, the variety of habitats it has. It is along the river so that gives it that classification. You can go to the next slide. The property still has a lot of high quality wetlands. It has prairie remnants. It has some disturbed uplands. Throughout history it's seen a lot of changes but it's still really retained a lot because it is such a wet area.

This slide is actually along the river and I think we have a night heron resting there. The area really does have a lot of wildlife. I didn't really do a wildlife survey when I did this. I really focused on the land, what are the natural communities out there, what kind of condition are they in. That was really what the grant was for. I do talk a little bit about the stream corridor, the river corridor itself, too. But that really wasn't covered.

As we talked about, this is the area that I worked in. The green areas are the upland areas, and the purple areas are all the wetland areas, so a lot of hydric soils out there. It's really a nice area. I don't know how well you can do this, but what I did is I took NRCS soil data, and when you look through their soil data they give you information on how those soils formed. Soils form over thousands of years, and what NRCS did say is these are the plants that formed these soils. So by using that I was able to make up a map to show the types of soils and what would have been marsh area, what would have been wet prairie, what would have been a mesic prairie, mesic prairie being a drier prairie, and then you also have dry prairies. So prairie goes everywhere from wet to dry and everything in between.

The woodland areas are the dark green so historically thousands of years there would

have been trees, primarily oaks, growing on those areas. So it just kind of gives us a little picture of what this landscape was like before European settlement into the area and farming and all of that.

This actually is a 1941 aerial photo. This is the earliest one I could find. I went to the NRCS office for this, too, and we kind of dug through their files to see what they had. And you can see that by 1941 already a lot of the area was under agricultural use. I don't know how well you can see it, but in here is Jerome Creek already ditched. It's very small. It's a much narrower Jerome Creek at that time. Des Plaines River you can see that. I'm coming along there. All of the agricultural fields. I'm just going to step over here and point to it.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

You want to bring the microphone with you.

Lori Artiomo:

Oh, can you hear me if I talk loud?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

It's for the record for transcribing.

Lori Artiomo:

Okay, I can do that. I don't know how well you can see it up there, but Jerome Creek has already been ditched by 1941. The Des Plaines River here, the channel was actually modified at some point. This is where the modifications actually were. We can look here. This area in that '41 photo was all under agricultural use. This was probably all being marsh hayed. We had agricultural fields up there. This was all under ag and so was this area here. As well as you see that straight line with the dark which is trees and woody vegetation? Everything to the east of that was also under agricultural use. We think that this area here was relatively untouched most of the time and maybe that just grazing occurred on that part of the property. That's more history.

Here are the stream channel modifications. You can see the old little Jerome Creek, and then in 1969 they came through and widened it to its current course that we have now. We have UT7 which is unnamed tributary 7. That's the name I used from SEWRPC. They have that in their Des Plaines River Planning Report. That was also ditched as early as 1941. But historically Jerome Creek area would have just been a big marsh and the same with the UT 7, it would have been a big wet area just draining. Everything was kind of flowing in there, just a big floodplain.

Here is what the modified stream channel along the Des Plaines River looks like. This area here is actually the upper tip, the part that kind of comes out. It's the north part of the property along the Des Plaines. You can see how it actually really does look like a much more definite stream channel. What you have all along the shore is reed canary grass.

Here, again, is another one. We're looking south. We're just north of where Jerome Creek flows into the Des Plaines. This is the river levels are rather high here, too. One of the things with the modified channels because they have so much reed canary grass on them, which could have been planed as part of when they moved that channel over, reed canary grass was used a lot to stabilize soils. That's why we have the problem we do now because it was used on roadways and everything. But one of the problems along river corridors is that the rhizomes are very dense, and when you have river flowing it will often cut underneath the reed canary grass so you actually get sedimentation and erosion coming from underneath so that you actually get a lot of sediment coming into the river from modified banks like that.

This area here I crossed the river and I know for a fact that there's at least a foot of soft silt on the bottom of the river there. And that sediment may have come from agricultural fields and everything through past land use practices. Here is where Jerome Creek is coming in, so we're looking down Jerome Creek but it's coming into the Des Plaines.

Just north of the property this is what the river looks like. It's slow, you don't have the high banks, and actually there's natural vegetation along there. You can't tell there but it's like native sedges. What this does is it allows the river during flood events that river has a place to go. Where in the channelized areas it's forced to go into the channel so it moves quicker. It's nicer to have the water go out. It has a place to go. It reduces downstream flooding when it can spread out like that.

This picture is taken just north of Highway 165. Again, you have all the native sedges and native vegetation and the banks are low so during flood events, again, that water has somewhere to go and isn't forced to stay in a channel.

In the late 1980s that was when Highway 165 was put in. And at that time WisPark was required to do some wetland mitigation because they were crossing the Des Plaines River and they were destroying wetlands. It was one of the first wetland mitigations in the area under the Clean Water Act. And so the areas in blue are where the wetland mitigations on this property took place. When they did the wetland mitigations as a requirement, a conservation easement had to be placed on that. So WisPark donated that property to The Nature Conservancy. The Nature Conservancy, the stipulation that they had to take that property they really liked it because it really did have some nice natural features on it but it really did need management. So they required as a condition of receiving that donation that they have some prairie restoration happen out there and have five years of management work out there that they did. That started in 1989 and went through 1993.

During that management work they did the restoration.

This is one of the pond creations. This is one by Jerome Creek with the prairie restoration around it, so that's a picture of that. So they did burning out there, prescribed burns, they did brush removal, they did other invasive removal and they actually collected seed on the property and spread it to other parts of the property to increase the diversity of plants out there.

Right now this is the existing native plant communities that we have out there. Not all of these are healthy. A lot of them are impacted by reed canary grass or brush and things like that. But these are the best parts that you have out there. The dark blue ones are the marsh, the wetter areas, and you have really three different kinds of marsh out there. You have cattail marsh, you have a sedge marsh, and then you have a sedge fragmities marsh. Fragmities when I say that some of you might think of the invasive fragmities. We actually have the native fragmities out there. I took it and had it tested so we know it is native, but we do have the invasive variety around it. It's actually in Prairie Springs Park around Lake Andrea and along the Interstate. To keep the native stock healthy we should try to find money to get rid of the other stuff because they hybridize so it's a problem.

Here is a picture of the sedge marsh. This is early spring. This is a big one. If you go to the next picture, when you look at it you don't really think there's much in there, even what you see in the background that's all still sedge marsh, but you have to be in there. There's just a ton of different plants in there. It's a very diverse plant community. Many animals and many birds use marsh communities so it's really nice to have such healthy ones. Those are the best communities that you have out there. This is just some more plants that are actually in there.

Here is a prairie remnant that you have. This one is in the area east of the Des Plaines and north of Jerome Creek. So this is kind of mid summer. What we have is prairie dog. It's very dominated by prairie dog and a lot of the other prairie species. Then if you go to the next one, one prairie dog is blooming but this is actually in another location. You have a couple different remnants that have some really nice species in it. Then the next one, and this is still in the prairie remnants, this is now in the fall and you have closed gentian in there. That's actually blooming among the dead leaves of the prairie dog now. Any time during the growing season you find something out there. It's pretty exciting.

You have a lot of bugs. This is actually a Viceroy butterfly feeding on joe pye weed. It's not a monarch so that was kind of fun to find. A lot of caterpillars. This happens to be a swallowtail eating something that's in the parsley family so you have those out there. And then the next one we have the garden spiders. These are the big orb weavers that build their big web. So just a lot of different bugs that use the prairies and the wetland areas. Once you get to monocultures of reed canary grass you don't see that because it crowds out all of the other plants.

This here are the major infestations of reed canary grass that you have. It's also interspersed in other areas, but this is where it's really dense. As you can see, it's all along Jerome Creek and the Des Plaines. And then the area that I was showing you that was farmed and probably marsh hayed on the southwest corner there. Actually it's where you have a variety. What they did with reed canary grass because they used it so much with agriculture, they came up with many different varieties, and so the one variety that you have grows to be over six feet tall and is just so dense. We do have a picture in there. When it re-seeds into another part—this is the reed canary grass along the Des Plaines. That was the slide you saw earlier but that's just pure monoculture of it.

Then the next one it's hard to see in the light, but you have a prairie remnant in the front and then just behind it it's all monoculture reed canary grass just slowly inching it's way. Reed canary grass will grow in areas that were disturbed, so this area may not have been as disturbed, the ground not dug up or sediment on it. That's where it likes to colonize. But it's making its way. Here is the really tall stuff next to other reed canary grass in the foreground, so you have your lower variety of reed canary grass and then you have this monster stuff out there. There's I'd say a five acre area that's just dense like that. And it's seeding into other areas.

Then we go to the invasive tree and shrub growth. Now, this is taking over because of a lack of fire. Historically this area would have been subjected to prairie fires so you'd have the fires coming through and it would keep a lot of the woody vegetation at bay. It would just really keep it under control. We also have the problem now that we have, introduced species. We have buckthorn and honeysuckle that are found throughout the site and they really are causing a problem. Those are the worst of it out there.

Here we have on the left honeysuckle, and it's not the lily in the front. The lily in the front is the prairie species. You can see this species is not going to have a place to grow as this honeysuckle continue growing and getting bigger. But the honeysuckle berries can be red or yellow and they grow in the higher areas so it's the mesic prairie basically, and so pretty soon that turks cap lily won't have a place to grow. Then next to it is buckthorn on the other side. I don't know if you can tell from here but it's just laden with seeds. It's just full of seeds. And for both of these bushes what happens is the birds carry those seeds around. They eat them, poop them out somewhere so you get a new plant starting and that's how they spread. That's why they get into isolated places.

Here we have an area that's a low prairie remnant where you've got the reed canary grass on one side and you've got the thicket on the other side, so it's getting it from both sides. You see a lot of that happening out there. Then here, again, you just see how those thickets form and it really crowds out the prairie. That's a real threat to prairie. This is one of the restored prairies. This is right off of the river road cul-de-sac. So what we have are tree species growing up. I think it's just green ash, but it's because there's no fire and the wind blew them in and there they are taking off. This is why fire should be introduced into this area again.

This is the non native fragmities in the background behind the cattail. You see how dense and big. It's just a huge monoculture, very dense, very tall. Nothing really can grow with it. It just takes over. This would be your native fragmities, much different. With the native fragmities that grows well with the other sedges, it's actually a very diverse community with the native fragmities but not with the non native.

So basically for the management plan what we want to do out there really is get rid of the invasive woody vegetation because you're losing the bits of prairie you have left out there, and to implement a prescribed burn program, but you have to do that with a reed canary grass program. The problem with the prescribed burn program is we are going to manage for the massasauga rattlesnake and the blandings turtle out there. There's anecdotal evidence that the eastern massasauga had been out there some time ago. We know it's the right habitat for it, and we also know that blandings turtle have been out there. So for prescribed burns we can only do it early spring or late fall. Well, if you burn early spring or late fall reed canary grass loves it, so you have to then come in and wherever you burn, I've divided the site into actually three management units, and you burn one a year ideally. And that summer then you would go out and manage for reed canary grass.

There's all kinds of research going on to find the best ways to manage reed canary grass. It's a complicated issue and it's going to probably take a variety of techniques, and it's going to be one of those really long-term learn as you go processes. John and I went out with Art Kitchen from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service last fall and walked the property. It's a possibility that the Fish and Wildlife Service could help out there to manage it. He is actually on a committee in Wisconsin that is looking into the best techniques for reed canary grass management. One of the problems with it is to burn it they want you to burn it in June. Well, if you're managing for some of the species we want to manage we can't burn in June. We might be able to burn small areas, not the whole site. I think I want to talk more to Art to find out really the best kind of tactic to take. It might be a matter of looking for grant funding to do reed canary grass management and also other funding from other sources like Pheasants Forever and some of the other groups, and then really put together a plan to do that out there. I think I would like to start in the areas that have the highest quality ecosystems left so that we can prevent them from degrading and the move to the more degraded areas.

Like I said, I didn't really talk about the oak woods. There are beautiful oak stands out there but they also need some management. Again, it's going to be the buckthorn and honeysuckle and there's also a lot of bramble on the bottom underneath the different raspberries and things like that and garlic mustard is also—I mean as isolated as that is there's garlic mustard in there, and we know people aren't traipsing through there. It could just be animals, deer or wind or who knows. But these also would benefit from a prescribed burn, but it would have to be under a different program than the grassland prescribed burn. It's a whole other animal so those would need just a different kind of

management for that.

Then, finally, this is another possibility is to establish a technical advisory team. One of the things we talked about with Art Kitchen was creating a meander in Jerome Creek. It was one of the recommendations that Ducks Unlimited gave to us. So we wanted to talk to him and what did he think about that. Really, you have to get a team of people together with DNR, Fish and Wildlife, maybe Army Corps of Engineers, just a bunch of people who really know how to do these sorts of restorations to take a look at it. I did talk to SEWRPC. They would be able to do some floodplain modeling.

What we would want to do is in the lower reaches of Jerome Creek make it a little more natural. Could that be done? If so, how would it be done and what would you need to do? Well, to begin you'd have to do floodplain modeling to see if you altered the course of that water would it back up and flood something else? So SEWRPC said they would do modeling for us, but the Village has to write them and request it. And they're behind so it may take they said up to a year before they would finally get to it. But to do anything like this would need a lot of planning anyway so it would be the first step to begin that. And, if you're going to ask SEWRPC to do that, you can ask it for a larger area. There's other things that Ducks Unlimited suggested. Some of it we can't do because it would impact privately owned land. Whenever you're playing with water the person upstream is going to be impacted and possibly downstream. So there's just a lot of thinking yet with that.

The other thing that was a possibility is to relax those stream banks where they did do the modification along the Des Plaines. If we can at least take some of the top layers of sediment and make those stream banks a little more go out and not so steep and to get some native vegetation back in there. I was talking to the guy from Applied Ecological Services who did some of the management work out there. And when they did some of the burning, of course, along the river the reed canary grass just got worse. So what they did was dig down to see where the native vegetation was. And he said it was down two feet under silt. Part of it could have been dredging. Part of it could be when you have flood events it brings that sediment up onto the riverbanks so it could have been a combination of things. But to be able to scrape that off and remove that and get that native vegetation growing and give that water a little more room to spread ever so slightly but it would reduce flooding downstream some. Those are what I'm recommending so far. That's where I'm at. If you have any questions?

Rita Christiansen:

That's a lot of information. John, where do we start?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Keep in mind this is just a draft plan. I don't believe that the final plan is due until June,

is that correct?

Lori Artiomo:

Right, and I'm trying to wrap it up. What I've been trying to do actually is look for grants to do some of the work so that I could apply for them and then I would kind of make the management plan kind of fit the grant application process, if you know what I mean, because it kind of couples everything nicer. So we did put in a grant application for a wildlife management grant from DNR. Actually it's federal monies, but this one would be to begin that brush removal and invasive woody species removal, because you really have to get that out of the way before you can do a good prescribed burn. So we'll see how that goes.

Rita Christiansen:

Lori, if I can back up here just a second if I may. Are you consulting for the Village?

Lori Artiomo:

Yes, I'm consulting.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

The Village was awarded a grant about a year and a half ago to complete a management plan for this project. And the management plan is something that was required by The Nature Conservancy when the Village took this property over in 2001. And so we went through the grant application process. We were awarded a grant. Then we tried to find a really good biologist to work on the project. Lori has really been spearheading a lot of this project. She really has a lot of expertise in here in this area, so we're really very fortunate to do it. And this is really just phase 1 of a multi-phase project. Phase 1 is just developing the plan, and then phase 2 is actually the steps to implement the plan. Hopefully we can apply for more grants once we have a management plan that will award us some sort of funding to complete some of the more active steps to manage this property.

Rita Christiansen:

So this is going to be a long-term process.

Lori Artiomo:

It's going to be in perpetuity actually. If you want to maintain those ecosystems and really enhance them you have to be adding fire to that landscape at least every seven years. You have to be monitoring for invasive species. The fragmities, the non native

fragmities, is the biggest threat right now. Right now your marshes out there that's ecosystems, the healthiest you have, and once that non native fragmities goes in there it's a whole other story. Right now it's the uplands that need to be managed.

Rita Christiansen:

And it looks like from the map, page 25 is that the map we're talking about, John, where management units?

Lori Artiomo:

Yes, that's it.

Rita Christiansen:

And you're talking about managing where first, Lori?

Lori Artiomo:

The east most so Jerome Creek first. From east and go west. Those are the healthiest there. I forgot to include that in here.

Rita Christiansen:

So this land along the north side is obviously all owned privately?

Lori Artiomo:

Yes.

Rita Christiansen:

So we don't have to worry about anything on that end because it looks like we don't really have—I mean if we're talking about the creek or changing it—

Lori Artiomo:

Yeah, really the Jerome Creek would be the problem. Relaxing stream banks along the Des Plaines where that was modified. I don't think you'd need to worry upstream at all or really downstream. That's a little different. We're just moving the banks, the sediment off of there and getting native vegetation back in there. That's what we're thinking about. It's Jerome Creek. If we actually put a meander in there because they cut right through a marsh when that went in and to try to spread that water back over that marsh the water might go back up east.

Rita Christiansen:

Could you put it back in the natural waterway it came out of, or is that not–

Lori Artiomio:

There is so much development because Jerome Creek is collecting water all the way, I don't even know how far it goes.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Almost up to Cooper Road.

Lori Artiomio:

And all that development, everything around there. A lot of the wetlands have been filled or modified especially when the power plant went in. Then their landfill also took up more. That's where we have to actually look to see where—one of the other things Art said is if you can go up Jerome Creek and find places where you could restore wetlands, if there was going to be an impact by restoring wetlands you could minimize it.

Also I was talking to Glenn about the Interstate work and that they would need to do some wetland mitigation because they would probably be destroying some. What DOT needs to do a wetland mitigation is land basically that's in agricultural use, is drained by gradient tiles, doesn't have any wetlands on it but has hydric soils so historically there were wetlands, and have a willing person who is going to sell that property, that's what they can restore for a wetland mitigation. Because I asked them about this property with all the reed canary grass because we have some real impacted wetlands that could be put to—they could be much more functional if we could restore some of that. She said no because they do it by a point system, and because it's public money that they're spending they have to take the absolute worst scenario of just an ag field that's been drained for farming and to return that is what they're looking for.

But if you guys know of any lands like that in Pleasant Prairie, especially along Jerome Creek or even then I guess in Bristol along the Des Plaines that wetland mitigations could take place. But I'm looking for the Jerome Creek. So if we did want to do a modification in there to make it a little more natural. I don't know how feasible that is. It's really a matter of getting a team of experts in there to really take a look at it and consider everything.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

I guess the real purpose I have on the agenda this evening is just to make the Park

Commission aware of the management plan that we are working on.

Lori Artiomo:

The real basic plan elements that I will be spelling out is really woody vegetation removal and beginning to work on that reed canary grass removal and monitoring for invasive species. The other things that I'm going to recommend are actually long-term things that we would-like good ideas. Like this would be a good idea.

Rita Christiansen:

Does anybody have any questions?

William Mills:

Just a couple of questions. So when is the plan, when are we targeting to have it completed then?

Lori Artiomo:

I'm hoping to have it completed soon, certainly before June. I would like to have it done by the end of the month.

William Mills:

Is that something then, John, that the Parks Commission will have to approve?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

We'll probably go through the same process as the Master Park and Open Space Plan.

Rita Christiansen:

Is there any chance, and I don't know if anybody else would be interested, in doing a walk about so we could see more of what you're talking about, Lori? Because when you talk about canary grass if anybody here has never been in a heavy-you can't even get through it?

Lori Artiomo:

You can't.

Rita Christiansen:

You really can't appreciate how bad it is.

Lori Artiomo:

And how little diversity you have in a situation like that because wildlife don't even use it. Insects don't even like it. It might have a few, but it would be nice to go out in the growing season. You'd have to wear boots. That's all I can say.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

If the Park Commission would like we could organize a field trip either before or after one of our upcoming meetings.

Rita Christiansen:

I'd love to do it.

William Mills:

Yes, I'd love to do it.

Rita Christiansen:

Field trip.

Lori Artiomo:

And I would say May or June. May things are starting to green up and June you have some more flowering. You can actually see a little bit more of what a prairie remnant is. Before that everything just looks dead.

Rita Christiansen:

You said you hope to have the plan done by June?

Lori Artiomo:

Yeah, it has to be done by June.

Rita Christiansen:

So would it be possible to go out and do a field trip prior to the meeting and come back and talk about the plan?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

We can either do it before the meeting, after the meeting, we can do it on a separate day, whichever the Commission would like.

Lori Artiomo:

And we can go in May. In May a lot of things are coming up. June is when you really appreciate the reed canary grass, though, because it's one of the first ones to come up and it's just horrible. But because really we should have approval of that plan in May so it can be submitted.

Michael Russert:

For the map on page 2 it shows the environmental corridors. Have there been any other plans developed or in progress about these other areas about management?

Lori Artiomo:

Village land or other lands beyond Village lands?

Michael Russert:

I guess both.

Lori Artiomo:

I don't know. I know that SEWRPC is a lot of times when it's doing its future looks at environmental corridors some areas may move some of their environmental corridor. I know along the Des Plaines SEWRPC really wants to keep environmental corridor and actually wants to expand environmental corridor by creating prairie and restoring things. That much I know. I do know that Kenosha-Racine Land Trust is currently trying to acquire some land along that Des Plaines River area which is in that environmental corridor. They, of course, would keep it in its natural state and manage it because, again, there's reed canary grass everywhere along the river. So any land that they would acquire they would be managing.

Rita Christiansen:

Just a couple things. Is there any way as this goes on and we will hopefully move forward to manage this land you'd have something like a university project or a university team, think about utilizing the resources like Eagle Scouts?

Lori Artiomo:

I'm so glad you brought that up because I do want to have research opportunities because there are so many from every level of education. You could get K through 12 kids out there doing work. You could have universities doing work. There are all kinds of opportunities.

Rita Christiansen:

I was thinking that would be a great way to get labor and to help because this is

Lori Artiomo:

The other thing that you could try is form a friends group, Friends of Prairie Springs Park Natural Area and get them going. So that's another idea.

Rita Christiansen:

Alex, did you have any questions?

Alex Tiahnybok:

No questions, thanks.

Rita Christiansen:

So tonight was an overview and then we'll have this plan again before us in time to—

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

That's correct.

Rita Christiansen:

If we can just get it ahead of time.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

We'll make sure we mail it out. We can even mail it out or drop it off at your house. I'm sure it's hard to e-mail.

Lori Artiomo:

The first time I tried it was really a big . . . reduced resolution because you need to see the pictures, you need to see the maps otherwise you don't know. This is a plan that needs

all the maps.

Rita Christiansen:

It's a great opportunity, too, for getting people to understand land management and how to do a burn. If anybody has ever participated in that and an opportunity to get trained it's really fascinating to do something like that.

Lori Artiomo:

And I do have that—actually the appendix will be much bigger than what's in there right now, but I thought that burn information needed to be in there so you understand really everything that's involved with a burn, and probably get the DNR involved, and to get local Village people trained to do that, especially if you are going to do it annually or semi-annually to have trained people to do that.

Rita Christiansen:

I've heard, Lori, and correct me if I'm wrong that burns sometimes will allow seeds that have been in the earth for a time to sprout which we would never have known otherwise without the burn?

Lori Artiomo:

Right. That and first getting rid of all that brush that's covering up old habitat. You get rid of all of that you do a burn and then go and wait and see what pops up. It could be very surprising.

Rita Christiansen:

Any other questions then? Thank you, Lori. Appreciate all the effort. Wonderful.

Lori Artiomo:

It's really fun.

Rita Christiansen:

We'll find on with our boots on. Thank you.

6. ADJOURNMENT.

Michael Russert:

Motion to adjourn.

William Mills:

I second.

Rita Christiansen:

Motion made and seconded. All in favor say aye.

Voices:

Aye.

Rita Christiansen:

Opposed? Being none, we are adjourned. Thank you everyone.