Como Woods Outdoor Classroom Advisory committee

MINUTES

Monday, January 24, 2011

1. ENRTF grant update-planned outcomes:

**RESULT 1:** Develop outdoor classroom study areas.

**Description:**

• Contractor(s) to complete 10.9 acres of woodland restoration to include oak

woodland, coniferous forest, and transitional woodland.

• Invasive species management contract. 17.75 acres annually for three years.

• Contractor(s) to complete 3.6 acres of prairie, savanna and sedge meadow

restoration.

• Contractor(s) to construct 0.85 acre propagation gardens. These propagation

beds will highlight useful native species in the home landscape and provide a

source for local ecotype plant material for future restoration activities within the

classroom.

• Contractor to construct ~4,000 feet of ADA accessible gravel trails.

• Sign construction and installation contract(s). Four entry signs and approximately

fifty interpretative trail signs.

• In-house design, engineering services, and project management to fully develop

restoration, trail, and sign construction activities.

**Status:**

Adam briefed the committee on the restoration targets and activities. The targets have been based on the soil type. The targets are based on the MN DNR ecological classification system of native plant communities. For more information go the the MN DNR website: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/npc/index.html>.

The native plant community targets are:

**Community Community Description name CWOC name size**

**Description**

FSs37 southern dry-mesic oak (maple) woodland oak woodland 5.8 acres

FDs27 southern dry-mesic pine-oak woodland coniferous forest 1.9

MHs37 southern dry-mesic oak forest transitional woods 3.2

UPs24 southern mesic savanna oak savanna 2.3

Ups23 southern mesic prairie tall grass prairie 0.95

FFs59 southern terrace forest sedge meadow 0.35

Each restoration target has a list of planned activities from 2/11 through 5/13.

A further decisions need to be made as to the extent of restoration activities in the transitional woodland.

Bryan expressed concerns about the extent of the buffer between the pool and the classroom. Is it enough? It was hard to tell without exact maps. But this lead to a discussion about the use of bathrooms in the pool area. All agree that while this is something the CWOC advisors on pool committee expressed an interest in, it is not likely to happen. The doors to pool bathroom are facing into the pool space, making them inaccessible to anyone not using the pool.

Adam noted a significant change from the original CWOC master plan: the corner of Horton and Hamline was slated as prairie. This and about the western 1/3 of the coniferous woodland area will be coniferous woodland. The rest of the coniferous woodland classroom will be prairie. This was done for several reasons:

* Less removal of existing conifer trees
* The trees in the eastern 2/3 of the master plan coniferous classroom are undesirable hardwoods that need to be removed.
* Better match to existing soil types and former native vegetation.

**RESULT 2:** Teacher training and student involvement.

**Description:**

• Receive DNR School Forest status.

• Host six educator training sessions (two each for elementary, middle, and high

school teachers). Involve ten educators per session. Designed to help

educators adapt to teaching in an outdoor classroom.

• Student participation in site restoration activities (500 youth/year).

• Coordinate and implement an outreach and marketing plan for the classroom.

**Status:**

School Forest-the agreement is still waiting approval by city legal staff. Kelley has been investigating initiating the agreement with Great River Montessori instead of Como Sr. High as they are using the woodland on a more consistent basis. Some initial contacts have been made and Great River has expressed interest.

Teacher training-the Digital Bridge to Nature workshop went very well; 27 teacher attended. We discussed the possibility of having a training focusing on the MN DNR sponsored programs: Project Learning Tree, Project Wild, and Project Water Education for Teachers. Teri expressed interest in helping but it could not be until the early fall of 2011.

1. **Report out-Joyce Kilmer Memorial Fireplace Restoration and Rededication**

The dedication is slated for Thursday, May 19 (same day as Como Sr. High Field Day.) This will happen in a light rain but severe weather would force a cancellation as Chelsea and Como Elementary are walking there.

1. **Recent and upcoming events in the woodland or related to the woodland?** Adam noted that the MCC crew may be starting as soon as 2/28 so they may be doing work in the woodland.

**4**. **Website additions-**note the permit system the Park and Recreation for using the woodland has been started and is on the CWOC website.

**Next meeting Monday, February 28- at Java Train-6:45pm**

Future meetings:

3/28—potentially 3-4:30 at Park and Rec office.

4/25

5/23

6/27