

Plan for the Maintenance of the Vegetation of Lashbrook Park:

The long-term objective of this plan is to enhance the presence of native plant species, and limit invasive non-natives. The goal is to enhance the natural attributes of the park to make it an enjoyable place for visitors to spend time.

Prairie: The Lashbrook prairie is the most authentic, highest quality, prairie restoration in Northfield, and perhaps in Southeast Minnesota. Keeping it in this condition will require a diligent effort. At present the main threats are from alien species growing along the borders of the prairie. These include Siberian Elm, Common Buckthorn, Canada Thistle, Wild Parsnip, and Reed Canary and Smooth Brome grasses. These can be controlled by cutting and treating cut stumps, by spraying foliage with appropriate herbicides, or by pulling. These must be done in a timely manner, to be effective. This work needs to be continued relentlessly in that seed sources surrounding the park are on land we do not control. Additional proposed management practices for the prairie include prescribed burns, followed by top-seeding with selected wildflower seed. We feel foliar spraying in the prairie should be limited because of the threat of drift. The prairie is in serious need of an early Spring burn.

Woods: In contrast, the woods were badly infested with several aggressive alien species. The most troubling of these is Common Buckthorn, which is being removed. Good progress has been made on this objective. Additional species of concern are: Reed Canary Grass, Garlic Mustard, and Poison Ivy.

Predominant species of mature trees are Black Ash and Common Boxelder. The latter is considered a “weed” tree. It is being eliminated gradually by cutting and girdling. Several more desirable species are becoming established naturally from seed sources adjacent to the Park. These include Hackberry, Black Walnut, Choke Cherry, Basswood, White Oak, Slippery Elm, Red Mulberry, and Silver and Red Maple. In addition, some selected species, such as Bitternut Hickory, Red Oak, and Kentucky Coffee Tree, could be introduced by planting seed or seedlings. At present the predominant species of shrub are: Red Berried Elderberry, Highbush Cranberry, Alternate Leaved and Red Twigged Dogwood, Prickly Ash, and Native Gooseberry. There is a nice assortment of native herbs and vines as well. These shrubs and herbs could also be supplemented with some additional species.

Walking paths thru the woods are being established to enhance visitor enjoyment. In places dead wood has been piled, to enhance habitat for wild life, and to provide a more esthetically enjoyable venue to visitors. Longer term plans might include construction of elevated walkways in designated wetland areas.

Ken Kirton: January, 2019