

HILLOWAY PARK

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2025



It was only six months ago that this newsletter extolled the return of migratory birds and the greening of the landscape. Now, already, geese are practicing migration flights and hummingbirds are fattening up for the trip south. How can this growing season go so quickly?

But it has been – is – a good growing season (unless you have standing water in your garden or field). Near normal rainfall has filled up lakes and streams, created lush landscapes, and even, in mid-August – green lawns!



Moisture loving Cardinal Flowers blooming near the north wetland and the south fen\

Fall 2025 Restoration Events

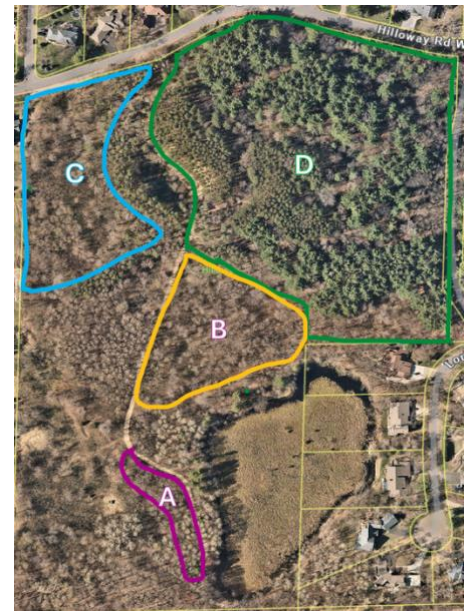
Speaking of time passing, it is once again buckthorn season! We have two events planned this fall:

Saturday, September 13, 10 AM – Noon

Saturday, October 11, 10 AM – Noon

We will focus on removing buckthorn on the slope on the west side of the main trail (Area A on map at right below). Register for these events at:

<https://www.minnetonkamn.gov/our-city/natural-resources/what-you-can-do/natural-resources-registration-form>



Restoration Progress 2025

Friends of Minnetonka Parks (FoMP) Volunteers. Thank you! Volunteers are the lifeblood of FoMP. On May 3 and May 31, volunteers worked to remove invasive garlic mustard, valerian, narrowleaf bittercress, and Dame's Rocket.



Buckthorn is resprouting in the areas we've worked on, but lots of new, desirable native plants are too. There are several varieties of sedge, grass, and wildflowers.



Side oats grama grass

Gray coneflower

Anise hyssop

Purple coneflower

For more photos of plants throughout the park and earlier in the year, check out our [Facebook page](#).

City of Minnetonka. FoMP cooperates with the City of Minnetonka to restore our parks. They provide us with expertise, tools, seed, and personnel to achieve restoration objectives. They also contract with outside restoration companies.

The City Forestry Department is performing a multi-year process of thinning the pine woodland. Several pines were removed last winter and more will be removed next winter.

In late winter 2024, the Forestry Department cut down black locust trees on the east side of the park. Outside of its native range, which is eastern U.S., black locust can be an aggressive, thicket-forming tree, crowding out other plants and altering soil conditions. The influx of sunlight after the trees were removed caused dormant seeds to spring to life. The City will mow, apply herbicide, and seed in this area.



Black locust sapling

In July, the City Natural Resources Department removed the area east of the main trail that was first mowed in 2023 (Area B on the map). This mowing weakens buckthorn resprouts, and when it leafs out again in the fall, they will apply herbicide.



Before and after photos of July 2025 mowing. Photos courtesy of Paul Schiller.

The City also mowed west of the main trail, where native grasses and wildflowers are making an impressive comeback. Especially at the northwest corner of the park (Area C on the map), you will find a sea of native grasses and wildflowers. However, there is no trail through the area yet, so it's difficult to traverse. Also, it's

rife with thorny and burred plants, so be forewarned. Future work will make this area more accessible.



Spotted Joe Pye weed and
giant goldenrod



Canada wild rye and
bottlebrush grass



Swamp milkweed

Contractors

In June, Minnesota Native Landscapes applied herbicide to invasive plants in the pine woodland (Area D on the map). Unfortunately, there are many invasive plants, so this will be an ongoing process.

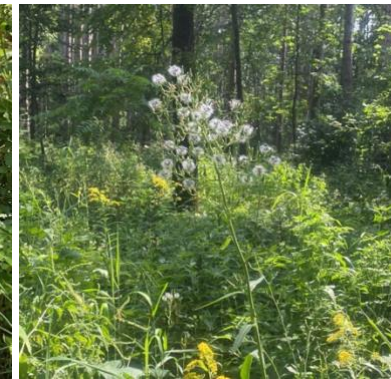
But there are desirable plants too – here are a few.



Wild cucumber (don't eat it)



Partridge pea



Tall blue lettuce

How You Can Help

If you can't donate your time at our scheduled events, there are still many ways you can help. To learn more and/ or get started volunteering, see the contact

information at the end of this section. **(Note: all volunteers in the park are required to sign a release form with the City and FoMP).**

- **Park monitor:** Walk the park frequently and monitor the emergence and location of native and invasive plants. This information (including photographs!) can be used to educate others about the park and help manage invasive plants. These contributions could be featured on our [Facebook page](#), [web page](#), or newsletters.
- **Adopt-a-Spot:** Your role will be similar to a park monitor, except you will 'adopt' a section of the park (the size and location of your choosing) and commit to managing invasives or communicating to FoMP the need to bring in more resources.
- **Volunteer on your own:** If you aren't ready to adopt a spot but would like to work on habitat restoration, see the contact information at the end of this section.
- **Donate to Friends of Hilloway Park** by clicking [here](#). You can specify that you want your donation to go to Hilloway Park.
- **Are you a photographer or graphic artist?** We would appreciate your help with our newsletter and website.
- **Write or call City of Minnetonka staff** to thank them for the work that they have done for our parks. Send your thanks and ideas for improvement to your city council representative and one or more of the following people:
 - Leslie Yetka, Natural Resources Manager
 - Matt Kumka, Park and Trail Project Manager
 - Paul Schiller, Natural Resources Technician
 - Josh Obermeyer, City Forester

To learn more or get started volunteering, contact Sabrina Harvey at hillowaypark@gmail.com or 952-456-2891. She will help you define an area or project to work on, inform you of best practices for restoration and disposal of plant material, get equipment and supplies, sign required release forms, and show you how to log volunteer hours with the City and FoMP. We look forward to working with you and THANK YOU!

