

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the scope of this project?

Vegetation management work includes removal of non-native invasive shrubs such as: buckthorn, honeysuckle, white mulberry, Oriental bittersweet and Japanese barberry. The work will involve several years of contracted removal through brush mowing and sawing to reduce the seed bank and re-sprouting of the non-native invasive shrubs. Planting native shrubs, wildflowers and grasses will occur as well to enhance the native vegetation and improve the area for wildlife.

Contractors working for the MPRB will be removing invasive shrubs using a forestry brush mower in areas that are accessible with mowing equipment. In areas where there are steep slopes, poor access or where the trunk diameter of invasives that are too large for the brush mower, hand cutting will be done using chainsaws and brush saws. Areas that are saw cut will have the resulting brush either chipped or shredded in place. This chipping is necessary for future access for invasive species control.

Some desirable native tree and shrub species will be impacted, but existing large sized trees will be protected by a three- foot buffer. In the buffer area buckthorn will be removed by hand cutting with chainsaws and brush saws.

What areas of the park will be affected?

There are two main project areas: 120 acres in South Wirth, between Glenwood Avenue and the southern border of the park near 394, and 40 acres in the “Back 40” (the north-westernmost section of the park west of the par 3 golf course, containing Luce Line trail and mountain biking trails.) The [Lessard Vegetation Management aerial maps](#) show a detailed overview of the project area.

Which areas of the park will not be affected?

The project area excludes the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden, volunteer stewardship area around the Wildflower Garden and the Quaking Bog. In those locations volunteers and trained youth workers will continue to perform invasive species removal by hand pulling.

Theodore Wirth Golf Club, the par 3 course and other developed park areas are not in the project area.

How will this project affect park users?

Impacts to park use will be temporary as contracted workers move through the park. Trails will remain open unless posted otherwise. Visitors should stay clear of active removal areas, power equipment, planting and erosion repair areas.

How will this project affect animals living in Wirth?

Some small animals and birds may be temporarily displaced while vegetation management takes place over the next several years. Ultimately, controlling invasive shrubs will allow native plants to thrive. These native plants offer higher quality food value for animals than invasive species do.

How will this project change Wirth's appearance?

In the short-term, forestry mowed areas will look rough. Overtime, annual mowing and brush sawing of buckthorn will reduce buckthorn re-sprouting, creating better conditions for native plants. The ultimate goal of the vegetation management is to foster an oak woodland / savanna type plant community with native wildflowers, grasses and shrubs. The Quaking Bog and a small pocket of Maple Basswood Forest will remain largely unchanged and will benefit from the work of volunteers and staff maintaining these areas.

Ongoing Vegetation Management in Wirth Park

The MPRB realizes that any invasive species removal will be an ongoing maintenance effort, as seed sources in adjacent lands will continue to spread into the project area.

The MPRB will monitor the effectiveness of brush mowing and if it is successful, additional staff time and equipment will be budgeted to continue mowing and working toward vegetation management practices. Future work in Wirth will be supplemented by the work of volunteers and stakeholder groups assisting with ongoing invasive species removal and native plantings.

For more information on the Lessard Vegetation Management project in Theodore Wirth Regional Park please visit minneapolisparcs.org/wirthrestoration