

Treeways

February 2012

Harmon Park used to have a substantial population of American elms. It used to have a crush of buckthorn and honeysuckle choking out all but the largest trees. Harmon Park does currently have a substantial population of green ash trees that will all likely die because of emerald ash borer. That means a huge ecological void in that will be filled by some type of trees and other vegetation. This is the perfect storm for woody invasive species to take over. Now is our chance to diversify Harmon Park's tree population to create a more resilient ecosystem. The Sunfish Lake Forestry Department (that is me your City Forester) is looking for an Eagle Scout or similar person to develop and lead a volunteer reforestation project for the City in Harmon Park, Musser Park and the Wahl Wetland.

The Community of Sunfish Lake has a very special attachment to its woodlands. Planting and caring for trees shows that you believe that the future is bright and that you believe "Paying it Forward" is a concept with merit. When your neighbors organized a "Buckthorn Bust" event in Musser Park two years ago more than 50 of our city residents showed up, in the freshly fallen snow, to help take back the park from this invasive pest. The efforts that day more than filled a 50 cubic yard dumpster with branches that were recycled for generating power.

We are well into the beginnings of replacing trees lost to oak wilt, Dutch elm disease, and in the near future emerald ash borer in Sunfish Lake. Volunteers planted 50 trees and shrubs in Harmon Park during the 2011 Arbor Day Green Fair and another 43 trees were planted on October 15th 2011, at the Green Futures Event in Musser Park. Nearly all were doing well going into winter. Other planting opportunities are planned for 2012.

Your City Council agrees that we should not wait until emerald ash borer takes all of our ash trees before we begin the reforestation process. We started in 2011 and will continue into the foreseeable future renovating and planting a diverse mix of new trees and understory shrubs into Sunfish Lake Parks and Wetlands. The plan is to use well-adapted native species with a sprinkling of non-invasive, non-natives. We have an opportunity to really get it right by planting no more than 30% of a particular tree family, no more than 20% of a particular tree genus and no more than 10% of a particular tree species.

Several people have expressed interest in having an area where memorial trees could be installed to commemorate special events or honor special people. Even in our small city we have locations suitable for such "Legacy Trees". If you have thoughts to share along these lines please contact me at the phone or email listed below. Future **Treeways** will address what to do if your woodland is mostly populated by ash.

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