



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
City of Duluth - Parks and Recreation Division

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DATE: 6/27/2016

SUBJECT: Hartley Park forest management project commences

BY: Pakou Ly, Communications Office

Hartley Park forest management project commences

[Duluth, MN] - As a regionally significant natural area, Hartley Park is recognized for its unusual expanse, landscape diversity and water resources. The Park's northern hardwood forests and wet meadows are among the largest of their type in the Duluth area. However, the Park's ecological importance is threatened by invasive plant species and the failure to proactively thin and replant forests planted in the 1940's that are now unnaturally uniform in age and species composition. Forest management was identified as a critical component of the Duluth Parks Commission and City Council approved Hartley Park Mini-master Plan.

The initial phase of the Mini-master Plan implementation started earlier this spring with invasive plant species removal. With this work mostly complete, the City's attention is turning to creating a healthy forest ecosystem. Starting today, June 27, the contractor will begin mobilizing equipment into the park and commence thinning practices this week in the pine stands to encourage growth of existing pine species. New trees will be planted in the near future to diversify the forest species.

The current pine stand is extremely overcrowded, and the existing pines must fight for limited amounts of sunlight, water, nutrients and rooting space. It is analogous to planting carrots, which must be thinned to create sufficient space to enable them to grow. If left unattended, carrots remain small and unhealthy, sometimes inviting pest problems.

The primary focus of the pine thinning project is to enhance the health of the pine stands for future generations. The secondary focus is to enhance plant age class and species diversity while still maintaining the open, cathedral-like appearance of these pine stands.

Project Details

The contractor plans to start on the "Soap Box Derby Hill". This work will likely take one week to complete the felling and wood processing. From there the plan is to move across the river at the bridge, and begin the thinning in the stand to the left, that is visible from the parking lot. The last stand will be the Rock Knob Stand down the Tunnel Trail. The contractor will spend about one week in each area. (see [Map](#))

To accomplish this, the contractor plans to be on site working four 10-hour days (Monday through Thursday) each week, with the exception of July 4th. The expected hours of operation are 6:30 AM thru 4:30 PM daily. Barring any complications or weather, the project should be done in 3-4 weeks.

The City will be erecting barricades in the parking lot to route traffic and secure operational space for the logging trucks. Flagging and barricade tape will be used to cordon-off access trails leading to the active thinning sites. City staff will be putting up posters at kiosks, inside the Hartley Nature Center and at critical access points explaining which trails and portions of the park are off limits to the visiting public during the project.

Impacts to Public Access

The public can expect to see on site skidders, one forwarder, one feller-buncher, a chipper and two semi-tractor trailers hauling products along designated roads to an off-site wood yard. This will hopefully minimize traffic congestion and provide for quick and efficient handling of the wood.

Signs warning the public about "Trucks Hauling" will be placed on Woodland Avenue and on the Hartley driveway.

The Superior Hiking Trail will be temporarily re-routed to enter into the Park at Fairmont Street rather than the Nature Center Parking lot. Signs will be placed at key locations with maps of the re-route.

The City wants to ensure safety for all park users. The public is requested to heed the project signage and to stay clear of the project area and equipment.

Please direct questions to Judy Gibbs, Parks and Recreation, at (218) 730-4308, or via email at jgibbs@duluthmn.gov

Relevant Documents and Background Information:

Hartley Park Mini-Master Plan, <http://www.duluthmn.gov/media/239907/Hartley-Master-Plan-07-21-2014.pdf>

Forest Management FAQ, <http://www.duluthmn.gov/parks/parks-planning/hartley-park-mini-master-plan/pine-thinning-project/>

Hartley Park Forest Management Project Map (indicates trail closures and hauling routes),
<http://www.duluthmn.gov/media/511416/trails-closed-june-27.jpg>

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