

ISLAND PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN AND GUIDELINES – 2019

Mission

Vision

Island Park, a 17-acre island in the Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary, will continue to be a natural area providing educational opportunities for all ages and quiet recreation, as well as conserving and protecting its natural ecosystems, native flora and fauna, and its cultural significance to the Alpena area.

Introduction

Island Park was a sand dune on the edge of the lake 12,000 years ago. The lake receded, leaving a river channel, the Thunder Bay River. Before settlement vegetation of that area of Alpena is listed as: Mixed Oak Savanna, Mixed Conifer Swamp, Hemlock and White Pine forest. Currently, the island is part Jack Pine forest and part sand dune covered with beach grass, Red Oak, Red and White Pine, *Populus* species and other grasses. Along the shoreline there are two marsh areas. Also present are invasive exotic species, Autumn Olive and Tartarian Honeysuckle, Glossy Buckthorn and Spotted Knapweed.

There is evidence that the island was occupied periodically by Native Americans until settlers arrived in the early 1800s and the logging industry began. After the Ninth Street dam was built in 1923, the water level rose and an island (Island Park) was formed.

Trees were cut for lumber and sand removed to be used as fill for the growing city of Alpena. When the Waterfowl Sanctuary, designated as such in 1938, the island was included. In 1944, it was deeded to the Sportsmen's Club.

The Sportmen's Club started conservation projects beginning in the 1940s by planting shrubs that provided food for birds, Autumn Olive and Tartarian Honeysuckle. During 1982 and 1983, soil conservation projects were implemented by Huron Pines Resource and Development Program and the Sportsmen's Club. Volunteer labor for these projects came from Alpena Community College students and the Michigan Youth Corps. These projects included building fishing platforms, stairways, nature trails, a handicapped viewing platform. O.B.Eustis Lookout, and a canoe launch. Beach grass was planted to control soil erosion. A gate to the bridge was installed to prevent wheeled vehicles from using the island.

Acquisition and Initial Plan

With decreasing members and funds, and limited space, the Sportsman's Club decided to sell the island. Grant money from the Michigan Land Trust Fund made it possible for the city of Alpena to buy the island as a natural area for environmental education and quiet recreation for public use by school and youth groups, senior citizens, local residents and visitors to the area.

In July 1985, the Alpena City Council voted to accept ownership of Sportsmen's Island which was purchased with the Land Trust Fund and local monies. The Alpena Community College Volunteer Center pledged to maintain the island with volunteer assistance for 10 years.

A Wildlife Sanctuary Advisory Committee (later the Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board) was appointed by the City Council at time of purchase. The Committee's mission was to maintain the island as a natural place for environmental education and quiet recreation. Management concerns were erosion control and preservation of the fragile environment. Action plans included, maintenance of trails and erosion repair projects by blocking vertical trails.

After the first 10 years of maintenance by Alpena community College promised at time of purchase, the island was maintained by many volunteers from many different organizations who participated in erosion control, planting, clean up, tree removal, surveys, invasive species removal and just general maintenance of the island over the year

Island Park: 1990 to 2015

In May 1991, the name officially changed back to the historic name of Island Park as was found on a stone monument on the island commemorating soldiers of WW II dated June 7, 1946.

An herbaceous plant inventory was done in 1993. Removal of non-native invasive shrubs and planting of indigenous plants was ongoing. Self-guiding pamphlets for five distinct habitats, birds, wildflowers and trees, with 25 tree identification markers were placed around the island, were published and guidelines for visitors were established.

Educational efforts included arranging guided nature tours for students. As many as 20 elementary classrooms a year took tours for many years.

Maintenance, repairs and improvements were done; notably the removal of the the concrete walkway and and the flagpole, the concrete shuffleboard and the club house. Electricity and water were also removed.

In 1995, the canoe dock was replaced and the gravel trail to the lookout was paved. The bathroom structure was cleaned out and painted and became a storage shed for maintenance equipment and River Rats program materials. In 2013, all the stairways were replaced by Mike Kendziorski and crew of Alpena.

Existing Conditions in 2015

Island Park lies within the Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary, measuring 443 acres, is within the boundaries of the city bounded by the north and the south shores of the Thunder Bay River between Bagley St. to the west and Washington bridge downstream. It is 17 acres, triangular in shape and approximately 600 feet above sea level.

There is a barked trail system around the island of approximately nine-tenths of a mile. There are connecting trails, some of which are barked. There are also several unsanctioned trails. A narrow asphalt road leads from Duck Park across the bridge to the island then proceeds to the O. B. Eustis Lookout which is handicapped accessible, at the top of the island from where the sanctuary islands can be viewed. The Lookout was named after O. B. Eustis, nature

writer and conservationist. There is another platform on the stairs at Ninebark Hollow for viewing the river. No bicycles allowed on the island.

Besides the viewing platforms there are also four stairways that facilitate movement around the island, four fishing docks and one canoe launch platform. A shed contains maintenance equipment and educational materials. In the amphitheater area there are three benches. There are two other benches, one on top of the island and one at the entrance, the latter one was an Eagle Scout project. There are two signs: one commemorating Soil Conservation District efforts at the top of the first stairway and one a map showing the trail system at the island entrance. A large rock monument at the entrance to the island is in memory of WWII soldiers.

Biological surveys

Surveys of the trees, visiting and nesting birds and herbaceous plants (1993) were accomplished by 1993. The various island habitats: swamp, marsh, dune, meadow and forest are described in another pamphlet.

A tree and shrub distribution survey was done by Alpena High School Agricultural Science students in 2005. A zone map for Autumn Olive was generated by Alpena Community College Advance Biology students for Autumn Olive removal in 2011. Since the Floristic Quality of the island is low, secondary succession is taking place with some planting of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants native to the area.

Recreation The island is ideal for quiet recreation such as walking, bird watching, photography and viewing nature.

Education Study of natural subjects is encouraged. School children visit the island often with teachers and science resource persons for nature education. Invasive non-native species education through identification and control methods occurs several times a year. A summer program called River Rats gives children 5 to 10 years hands-on natural science education. Self-guided pamphlets describing the flora and fauna of the island are available to the public at the entrance to the island and can found on the City of Alpena website.

Preservation The island's vulnerable ecosystem is of special concern. The aim is not only to protect the environment but to protect the wildlife that inhabits or visits the island.

Management zones The island is defined by the trail system, lookout, docks, stairways and amphitheater, all of which are maintained. For ease in describing, habitats and trails were named. The habitat areas are named Jack Pine Forest, Nine Bark Hollow, Wildflower Meadow, Turtle Bar, Birding Point, Blackbird Marsh, Oak Dunes, Circle of Pines, Prairie Grassland, Poplar Grove and Saw-whet Swamp. The trails are named Long Rapids Trail, Chisholm Trail and Oxbow Trail.

There are ecologically sensitive areas that should not be disturbed. Visitors are encourage to stay on the designated trails. Two erosion areas are marked by signs. There are restrictions for wheeled vehicles and bicycles. Dogs must be leashed.

The City is to be contacted by anyone wishing to have group activities on the island .

Developments 2015 – 2019

Signs The original 25 tree markers were replaced in 2017 with 17 signs on posts placed about the island. Fifteen signs describe the tree species, showing a photo of tree, leaf and seed. Two signs describe the effects of erosion and the emerald ash borer. All signs have a hash tag for further study. This was an Eagle Scout project of James Schultz. The Tree Sampler Pamphlet was updated at this time.

Three unsanctioned trails are blocked by brush and signs “Not A Trail” are posted. A new sign that encouraging activities such as walking only on designated trails, enjoying the flora and fauna and peace and quiet away from a busy city is posted at the entrance. This sign also requests people not to sled and bicycle on the island and to keep dogs on a leash. Doggy mitts and a trash can are now available on the island.

Vandalism An Eagle Scout project, a sign board illustrating the wildlife seen from the west dock, was vandalized and had to be removed. Another Eagle Scout project, two benches placed along the trails, was also vandalized and removed. The shed was repainted 2 times because of graffiti and the Amphitheater benches had to be replaced due to damage. Vandalism continues to be a problem.

The Bridge In 2015, Mike Kendjorski with the help of numerous volunteers from the community built a large covered wooden bridge joining Duck Park to Island Park. For one summer, access to the island was stopped which proved to be beneficial for the fragile habitats on the island. The areas at the sides of the bridge and the entrance to the island were planted with native wildflowers and grasses with volunteer help.

The Docks Repair, removal of graffiti and brush improved the docks for viewing and fishing. Due to improved regulation of the dams, the west dock is now too high for fishing but is excellent for viewing wildlife.

Secondary Succession Over the past few years, the landscape on the island has changed. The sandy areas of the Wildflower Meadow and the Turtle Bar, have seen an increase in Jack Pine, Balsam Poplar and White Pine. Native wildflowers and grasses such as Dotted Mint, Gillmans Goldenrod, Common Milkweed and Bluestem and Indian grasses moved into these areas also. The Prairie Grassland is now filling with young Aspen. Sunny hillsides have seen an increase in *Amelanchier* and *Prunus* species.

These areas are less fragile now, however, some areas, around the Lookout and on the Oak dune trail toward the Poplar Grove, sledding and increased foot traffic have beaten down the vegetation and increased erosion.

The Jack Pine Forest has matured and fallen trees are being replaced by Cedar and Buckthorn. Glossy Buckthorn, a non-native invasive species is prevalent on the island. Autumn Olive, another non-native invasive species, is removed yearly, but, as yet, no program to remove the buckthorn has been started.

Activities and Events Visitors to the island are many and have increased since the attractive new bridge was built. River Rats Program during the summer uses the island for nature study. This program is followed by Science in the Sanctuary which is held on the island.

Students from Besser School come twice a year with teacher and US Fish and Wildlife staff to study nature, native wildflower planting and trash pick up. The Thunder Bay Audubon Society has held two Beginning Birding programs on the island.

Volunteers A volunteer orientation was started with volunteers given a copy of the IPMP, a River Center bag and a tour of the island. The maintenance of the island by Board members has been greatly helped by volunteers. Trail barking and clearing of stairways has been done by the AHS Robotics teams, the Youth Volunteer Corps and others.

Maintenance General maintenance of island trails and structures, including birdhouses and shed continues on a yearly basis. Removal of Autumn Olive in the fall and Spotted Knapweed in the summer is done every year. Also Actions recommended in the Management Plan are carried out.

Bibliography

Kus, Cindy; THE ALPENA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, A Planning Study, 1980
Minutes from the Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board, 1990 to 2015 and 2015 to 2019

ISLAND PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN AND GUIDELINES - MARCH 2019

TRAILS:

Goal: People will have access to all habitats, however they will be asked to walk only on the trails (See ENVIRONMENT, WILDLIFE AND VISITORS).

The main trails and stairways will be maintained free from obstruction and debris. Dead trees that are close to the trails or fall on the trails will be removed. Branches encroaching on the trails and stairways will be trimmed back. Poison ivy where it grows close to the trails will be removed with a suitable herbicide.

Recommendations:

1. The main trails and trails to all the distinct habitats will be maintained, such as barking. (See Appendix 1)
2. Vertical trails will be blocked in sensitive areas with brush and/or plantings of suitable vegetation. If traffic on these trails within 2 -3 years, man-made barriers will be built.
3. A pamphlet and signs will be created to describe designated trails, appropriate for walking.
4. Stairways will be kept free of sand and vegetation.

Actions:

1. Maintain all designated trails and stairways.
2. Block vertical and shoreline trails with brush and native plant vegetation.
3. Build barriers where brush and native plant vegetation have failed to protect the environment.
4. Make a sign that describes Island Park Guidelines.
5. Mark trails with logs or other structures

FORESTS AND OTHER HABITATS:

Goal: Maintain a healthy environment in all habitats and remove invasive species. Develop a plan to educate public about erosion and erosion prevention. (see EDUCATION) Planting native plants suitable to the island ecology is approved. The Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board is aware the island ecosystem is not likely to ever return to its pre-settlement condition.

Recommendations:

1. Invasive species will be removed using the Bradley Method. (See Appendix 2)
2. Aged Jack Pine will be culled from the forest as needed. Major removal of Jack Pine will be only be done after consultation with specialist.
3. Native plants will be planted in suitable habitats either to enhance biodiversity (consult specialist), to prevent erosion or to replace trees being removed. (see BIODIVERSITY)
4. Protect sensitive habitats.

Actions:

1. Consult with a specialist to establish a plan for removal of all aged Jack Pine if wanted.
2. Invasive species will be removed annually by volunteers.
3. Encourage planting of native species. (See BIODIVERSITY)
4. Remove Spotted Knapweed and Autumn Olive annually.
5. Post signage that encouraging walking on designated trails, quiet recreation, no

sledding or bicycling and leashing dogs.

HARD LANDSCAPES (STRUCTURES):

Goal: Hard landscape consists of the docks, stairways and railings, 2 lookouts, benches (3 in the Amphitheater, 1 at the edge of the Wildflower Meadow) and the shed. These are to be kept in good repair. Access to the water for fishing is available at 3 docks. These docks and trails to them are kept open and maintained. The fourth dock is too high for fishing and is now for viewing. The shed contents are inventoried and kept tidy. (See Appendix 3)

Tree signs (17) and other signs (2), for Erosion and Emerald Ash Borer, are placed about the island to assist in tree identification and ecological concern. Vegetation is cleared around the markers for visibility.

There should be minimal construction, only that which protects the natural area and has been approved. Building and signage is to be kept to a minimum in order to focus on the natural environment.

Signs of vandalism should be reported and removed.

Recommendations:

1. Further structures in the form of barriers to unsanctioned traffic are needed. (See TRAILS Action #3).
2. The Soil Conservation District (SCD) sign is damaged and not repairable.

Actions:

1. Identify areas where brush and plantings as barriers have not proved effective in the past 2 or 3 years and construct barriers. (See TRAILS)
2. Remove old tree markers and repair new tree markers as needed.
3. Remove SCD sign and put a bench in this area.

PAMPHLETS:

Goal: Provide self-guiding pamphlets for nature study of the island and are a big part of the island experience. The various pamphlets are stocked and available at the entrance. The rack is checked and filled every week from April to October. Copies of the pamphlets can be found on the City of Alpena website.

Recommendations:

1. The Board will review pamphlets. (See ENVIRONMENT, WILDLIFE AND VISITORS) and keep current.

Actions:

1. The Board will review and update all pamphlets as needed.
2. The Common Wildflower pamphlet will be updated.

BIODIVERSITY:

Goal: The island has a diverse number of native trees and shrubs and a few native herbaceous plants. Plantings on the island are to be done with plants native to the Great Lakes. In an attempt to encourage native biodiversity, non-native invasive shrubs and plants are being removed. Native plants and seeds can be planted after the non-native vegetation is removed.

Flower beds are discouraged because of lack of a water source and volunteers to care for the plants. Native wildflowers and grass were planted on either side of the the bridge and shoreline of the island near the bridge. Native shrubs and trees also planted on the island.

Recommendations:

1. Small, more selective plantings are recommended.
2. Any new plantings will be approved by the Board.
3. Removal of non-native invasive species is encouraged. (See FOREST)
4. Native plants and seeds will be planted after non-native invasive species are removed.

Actions:

1. Approve all plantings.
2. Maintain native plant landscape at the bridge.

EDUCATION:

Goal: The Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board appreciates and seeks assistance from natural resource professionals to become better stewards. It is the Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board's mission to promote and encourage nature education for all ages, preferably in small groups. The study of secondary succession is endorsed. (See Appendix 4) Groups are encouraged to contact City Hall before they plan activities on the island. (see GUIDELINES)

Recommendations:

1. Enhance study areas.
2. Encourage aquatic studies.
3. Provide access to the water for aquatic study.
4. Maintain birdhouses.
5. Start Erosion Education Program

Actions:

1. Consult with specialists to supplement and improve herptofauna habitat.
2. Build a boardwalk into Blackbird Marsh with access to the water for study of aquatic wildlife.
3. Build aquatic study area in area of west dock.
4. Build Erosion Study area near Lookout.

RIVER CENTER:

Goal: Island Park will be maintained as the outdoor lab for the proposed River Center providing a place for Natural Science Education.

TRASH:

Goal: Regular removal of trash is needed.

Recommendations:

1. Ask for help from volunteers.

Action:

1. Contact volunteer groups for assistance.

VOLUNTEERS:

Goal: In addition to members of the Board, volunteers are helpful in carrying out the management plan. It is also important that members of the community become involved in the care of the island and sanctuary for the protection of the island and the entire sanctuary. Volunteers are encouraged to help with maintenance on the Island.

Recommendations:

1. A friends/volunteer group is helpful and important for the protection and maintenance of the island.
2. Plans for maintenance should include volunteers.

Actions:

1. A Board members will actively work to create a roster of volunteers.
2. Volunteers will be notified by Facebook, media outlets and email of maintenance activities.

ENVIRONMENT, WILDLIFE AND VISITORS:

Goal: The Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary Board is tasked with protecting the island flora and fauna. Visitors are welcome. Bicycles and vehicles, except those needed for Board activities, are restricted. Strollers and wheelchairs are permitted. Snow sledding is not allowed on the island.

Dogs can visit the island with their owners, however, dogs must be leashed. Mutt Mitts and trash cans are available on the island.

Recommendations:

1. Visitors will be asked to stay on the designated trails shown on the large map at the entrance and on the maps in the pamphlets.
2. A sign will be installed on the island asking owners to leash their dogs for the protection of other visitors and wildlife, no sledding, no bicycling, quiet recreation and nature study.

Actions:

1. Board members will monitor and encourage above recommendations.
2. Maps and signage will be available to help visitors.

A. Island Park Management Plan Committee: Elizabeth Littler, Melissa Doubek, Vernie

Nethercut, Stephanie Prince and Roger Witherbee, ex officio.

B. Island Park Management Plan (IPMP) updated by Elizabeth Littler, March 2015.

2015 IPMP updated by Elizabeth Littler and Terry Gougeon, February 2019.

THE GUIDELINES

Welcome to Island Park, the heart of the Alpena Wildlife Sanctuary, where you can spend a time away from the noise and bustle of the city in a natural environment preserved for your enjoyment.

If you are quiet you may observe many birds and other wildlife - please respect the wildlife as the island is their home.

Take pictures, a walk, go fishing, look at the views or rest on a bench – a time for quiet recreation.

Because the island is a fragile sand dune lightly covered with soil and plants, please stay on the trails.

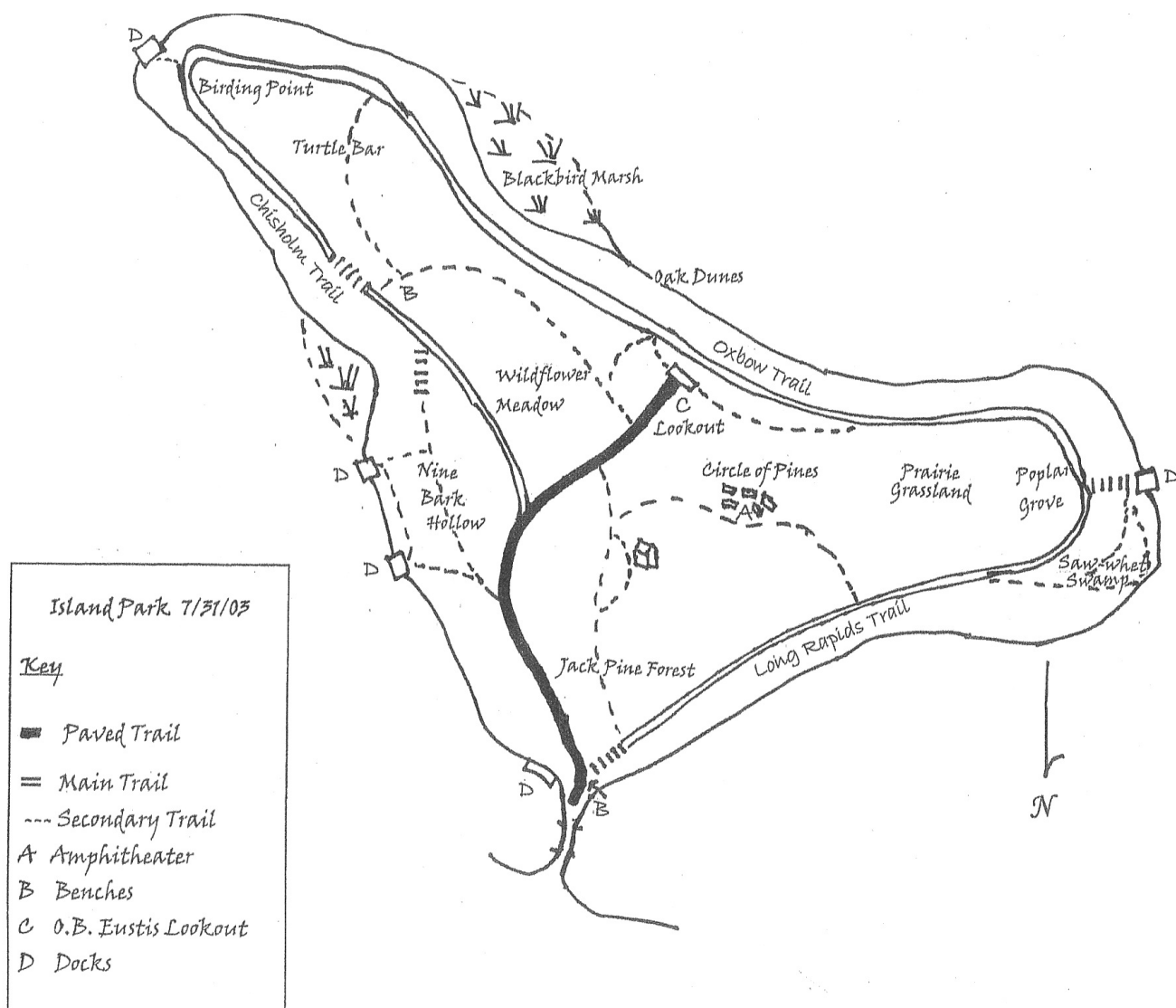
Please keep your dog on a leash at all times for the enjoyment and safety of people, plants and wildlife.

For group activities, please register with the city by calling the Alpena City Planner at 354-1771

APPENDIX

1. Map of Island Park showing trails for walking
2. Bradley Method
3. Inventory of Island Park shed. (Updated 2019)
4. Email from Phyllis Higgman, Natural Features Inventory

Appendix 1 Map of Island Park with Trails



The Bradley Method for Control of Invasive Plants **As summarized by**

Thomas D. Brock, Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Madison
1227 Dartmouth Rd., Madison, WI 53705 email: tdbrock@facstaff.wisc.edu

An interesting approach to control of invasive plants in natural habitats is the Bradley Method, first developed in Australia by the late Joan Bradley and her sister Eileen. Outside of Australia it has apparently only been used in California, but it should be applicable to most parts of the world. The Bradley method is first of all a strategy for, or even a "philosophy" of, long-term control of invasive plants.

There are three basic principles of the Bradley Method:

Always begin control work in undisturbed natural areas, and then work out toward areas more heavily infested with invasives.

According to the Bradleys, if native plants are given a chance they will recover the ground that has been taken from them by invasive plants. The principal here is to start in areas where the native plants are thriving and gradually clear into the more heavily invaded areas. Non-natives do not invade readily into areas where the native plants are already well established. If one clears invasives in the worst areas first, this may not only be ineffective, it may be harmful. Removing non-natives in such areas exposes bare ground, tipping the balance in favor of the weeds. On the other hand, weeding a little at a time within and adjacent to good stands of native plants, then moving outward toward the most invaded areas, gives the natives a chance to move in and thrive.

While removing invasive plants, try to keep from disturbing the environment any more than necessary.

Large numbers of invasive plant seeds rain down on natural areas. If the ground is opened, these seeds can thrive. Undisturbed native soil, with its natural mulch, is resistant to invasion by non-native plants.

Do not over-clear.

Leave the natural area as undisturbed as possible. If a large team of workers is available, people should spread out and weed small amounts in many places, rather than having the entire crew work in one place. The total area cleared of invasives will be as large, but regeneration by native plants will be greater. The Bradley method emphasizes that removing invasive plants from a natural area involves two different kinds of time, *working time* and *waiting time*. Patience is not only a virtue; it is essential.

1) Start with areas where native plants are dominant. Invasive plants may be scattered throughout, singly or in small groups. The risk of over-clearing here is nil, so this is the place to start. After clearing all the invasives, return once or twice a year and remove any that were missed, or which have colonized by seed.

2) After the least disturbed areas are cleared of non-natives, move into areas more heavily invaded, where there is some native undergrowth. Choose an area of substantial native plant growth, where native plants are pushing up against a mixture of invasive plants and natives. Remove non-natives in a strip about 10 feet across, then stop and give the natives time to move into the weeded areas. As the natives take hold, extend the strip along the boundary.

3) Maintain the advantage already gained. It is important to resist the temptation to clear more deeply into the heavily invaded areas before regenerating natives have become established. Invasive plant seeds will continue to germinate in newly cleared areas, so they should be removed as soon as possible. This is more important than starting to clear new areas.

4) Be very cautious when moving into the worst areas. However ugly an area of solid invasive plants may look, do not start clearing it until the native vegetation has been brought right up to its border. Although Joan and Eileen Bradley were trained as chemists, their method makes very little use of herbicides. "We regenerate [native vegetation] by using methods that give us the most effective kill of weeds and the most bountiful growth of natives; that is, by skilful manual weeding. This can be laborious, and we are often asked, especially when we are having to spend a long time extracting a big weed, 'Why don't you poison it?' We prefer not to use poisons if we can avoid it, and we certainly condemn their indiscriminate use." Their reasoning is that herbicides are not truly selective, may have detrimental effects on the environment, and do not always work. However, they do admit that for some invasive plants, or for some areas, herbicides may be necessary. However, their hand weeding technique is perfectly safe, highly effective, and reliable. It does require one trait that we do not always have or want to use: staying power. Details of the Bradley method, including many practical suggestions for weeding, have been published:

Bradley, Joan. 1997. *Bringing back the bush: The Bradley method of bush regeneration.*

Lansdowne Publishing Pty. Ltd. 18 Argyle Street , The Rocks, New South Wales, Australia. I obtained my copy of this book from Books of Nature, P.O. Box 345, Lindfield NSW 2070, Australia. <http://www.booksofnature.com>

Appendix 3 Shed Inventory

Island Park Shed Inventory September 2019

- 1 Partial bag of sphagnum moss
- 1 Small roll of garbage bags
- 7 Longhandled loppers
- 4 Hand pruners
- 4 Large poly leaf rakes
- 1 Small leaf rake
- 3 Pitch forks, one has a broken handle
- 1 Pointed shovel
- 1 Flat shovel
- 2 Garden rakes
- 8 (6 x 6 x 4ft) treated stair tread lumber
- 2 Half sheets 3/8 treated plywood
- 3 (2 x 4) one 8ft treated, one 8ft standard, one 10ft standard
- 1 Metal fire ring
- 2 Two wheel barrows
- 1 Small light duty barrow
- 1 Extension cord on reel
- 1 Empty 5gal. pail
- 1 Blue tarp size undetermined
- 1 Small hacksaw handle
- 3 Roller handles in a pail
- 1 Roller handle, 2 Rollers, 1 paint brush in a bag
- 2 Roller pans
- 2 Partial cans of spray paint, green and tan
- Undetermined number of deck screws 2 ½ inch and 1 1/4 inch
- 9 Pavers
- 17 Used cement blocks, narrow width
- 1 New cement block narrow width
- 1 New regular size cement block
- 1 Partial box of Aluminum Sulfate
- 2 Partial gals. of Round Up, sprayer nozzles attached

River Rats

- 2 Metal folding chairs
- 2 Five gallon pails of stones
- 1 Partial beaver lodge
- 1 Tree identification panel
- 1 Four panel display of River Center Information

Appendix 4 Email from Phyllis Higman

From: "Phyllis Higman" <higmanp@michigan.gov>
To: <elitter@northland.lib.mi.us>
Sent: Tuesday, October 21, 2003 2:04 PM
Subject: Re: Island park, Alpena

Hi Elizabeth,

Thank you for your follow-up note and brochures and thanks for your great work!

Unfortunately, we have no discretionary time to make unfunded site visits, nor are we able to consider most small grants. We are called upon frequently, but have to accomplish the tasks that are contained within the many contracts we are already engaged in. Most of us are booked way beyond a normal work week.

I can give you some general recommendations based upon the information you supplied me. The approach I would take is to define the natural communities you have, e.g., jack pine forest, dry sand prairie, etc., and learn as much as you can about each, including species composition and natural processes that maintain them. Your actions in terms of management should reflect how the system works. For example if you have a prairie that historically burned, then you could consider burning as a management option.

In terms of native species, I applaud your efforts to use only native species. Whether you should re-plant depends upon the specifics of your site. If there is a natural seed source already growing there, you may want to let them seed themselves in. However, if it is highly disturbed, you may end up with exotic species re-invading. Over the long-term, reinstituting the natural processes for the system (such as fire or wind throw) or mimicking them may be the only way to keep invasives down.

I suggest that you take a look at our web site and go to publications and report/abstracts. Then scroll down to the community abstracts and see if any of these correspond to those you have on the Island. They are chock full of information on natural processes and other pertinent information.

<http://web4.msu.edu/mnfi/pub/abstracts.cfm>

There are many web sites that deal with exotic species as well. I suggest you do a google search and see what you come up with.

Regarding the Jack Pine, I suggest that Rich Stevenson's advice is likely to be sound. He has many years of forestry under his belt.

If I can help with any other specific concerns, let me know.