

Friends of Fort Williams Park Ecology Project Report, 03-20-19

Planning:

- On Friday, June 21st, a number of Rotary Club volunteers are going to clear invasives near the Firehouse in the woods. However, I'd like to have an additional site or two for volunteer projects. Is FWPC interested in having volunteers clear some of the large debris 'mulch' left from the invasives mowing at Battery Blair? Unfortunately, Toms of Maine (150 volunteers) has decided not to participate this year.

Maintenance:

- Cliffside and Cliff Walk Landscape: Dan O'Wrill (Blue Ox Maine), an arborist, started work along Cliffside and the Cliff Walk. He will finish this week.
- Children's Garden: Nick Tammaro is going to give me an estimate for work in the Children's Garden. Two possibilities that I would like to discuss with FWPC:
 1. The hillside next to the slide needs to be considered. Kids scramble up the hill next to the slide and so the soil has eroded. The rounded stones that were supposed to serve as stepping stones aren't functional (and I'm afraid that someone will get hurt). There are short green metal posts along the sides of the slide that were put in place (I think) to try to prevent people from walking on the plants. Nick was going to give me an estimate to put in new granite stairs and handrail (similar to the other stairs/rails in the Children's Garden), but then I wondered about the existing cement stairs to the west of the slide (coming up from the pond). Would it be possible for FFWP and FWPC to work together to remove the old cement stairs and put in the new stairs (closer to the slide)? Also, near the old cement stairs is a big patch of honeysuckle, forsythia, bittersweet and other plants that I'd be happy to remove.
 2. Someone wants to donate a decorative sculpture for the Children's Garden, but I suggested an alternative: a grove of shagbark hickories (or other nut trees) between the Children's Garden and the Tree Succession area--to the north of the CG. I have a (potential) separate donor for the plant material, and have asked Nick Tammaro for an estimate to dig the holes, site prep, etc. If this could work, I envision that the site wouldn't be mowed, but would look like an orchard with an understory of tall grasses/wildflowers. I noticed other groves of shagbark hickories at Gull Crest (near the football field). These trees are beautiful, have amazing fall color, are great for wildlife, etc. I just wanted input from FWPC at this very early stage of discussion. (The donor would provide for a maintenance budget.)

Thank you!

Andrea Southworth