

Park & Recreation Commission Item

February 25, 2025



Item	Great River Greening Lake Ann Park Preserve Project Update
Item No:	G.1
Agenda Section	<u>GENERAL BUSINESS</u>
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SUGGESTED ACTION

Discussion

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Annually, Great River Greening - working with its partners - restores at least 6,000 acres of habitat on public lands and engages 5,000 volunteers and community members in the implementation of these restoration projects. They currently work throughout Minnesota but have deep programmatic roots in the Twin Cities Metro, Anoka Sandplain, Canon River watershed, and Minnesota River watershed. Their team of ecologists have broad experience and training, working on a range of sites, including county and city parks, wildlife management areas, and scientific and natural areas. Partners have included the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the Department of Natural Resources, and hundreds of city and county landowners across Minnesota.

DISCUSSION

The Lake Ann Park Preserve has been isolated from public access for many years, which has allowed a high-quality maple basswood forest to flourish in the central area of the property. Invasive species, such as buckthorn, garlic mustard, reed canary grass, and narrow-leaved cattails are creeping into the site along the edges of the property, but much of the area is high quality and represents historic vegetative communities. The most prominent invasive species on the property is buckthorn, which is dense within the forested fringes and adjacent private properties.

Great River Greening (GRG) will restore and enhance 100 acres of forest habitat. Projects include invasive tree removal, tree stand thinning, onsite biochar processing, planting and seeding native grass

and wildflowers, planting climate-resilient large stock and bare-root trees and shrubs, understory management, herbicide application and spot-spraying, and prescribed burning. GRG will be implementing the use of a mobile biochar system to process biomass, reduce offsite disposal, minimize the environmental impacts of pile burning, and incorporate biochar onsite to promote healthier soil. Below is a description of project details, grant timelines, and grant funding available for the Lake Ann Park Preserve.

Metro Big Rivers Phase 13 - active July 2023 - June 2028

- BIG132, Lake Ann Park Preserve Phase 1
- 40 acres of forest enhancement Project budget = \$139,600 (including \$112,800 in contracting, \$5,000 in supplies, and \$21,800 in GRG staff time and travel)
- Requested cash match from city = \$20,000 (total over the duration of the grant for GRG operational costs)

Metro Big Rivers Phase 14 - active July 2024 - June 2029

- BIG141, Lake Ann Park Preserve Phase 2
- 60 acres of forest enhancement
- Project budget = \$210,700 (including \$180,000 in contracting, \$7,500 in supplies, and \$23,200 in GRG staff time and travel)
- Requested cash match from City = \$22,000 (total over the duration of the grant for GRG operational costs)

Collectively, these grant budgets can be combined to work on the approximately 100 acres of woodland and adjacent wetlands focusing on invasive buckthorn removal, follow-up control, and ash removal, in the newer portion of the Lake Ann Park Preserve. Great River Greening staff will provide the oversight and coordination for the design and implementation of the contracted natural resource management work, with full approval from the city, as funded by the OHF grants described above. The broad timeline for the project would be as follows:

Winter 2025

- 1st year buckthorn cut and stump treat. The material would be slash-cut flush with the ground to decompose. Possible pile burning where the material is denser.

Winter 2025

- Selective removal hazard trees (Emerald ash borer affected trees)

2025 through spring 2029

- Multiple years of buckthorn follow-up control (summer brush cut w/fall herbicide treatment)
- As needed BT grass understory seed mix
- Garlic mustard treatment and mapping

RECOMMENDATION

ATTACHMENTS