

Attending: Kathleen Arch, Keith Schulenburg, Rick Kaiser, Betsy Abert, Jan Marsh, Don Bulley, Don Lawson, Jody Johnson, Milwaukee County Parks Natural Areas Coordinator Brian Russart, and assistants Julia Robson and Lea Cutsforth; South Milwaukee Police Officer Todd Vinogradsky

A visitor frequenting Grant Park beach within the last 2 or 3 weeks seems to think clothing is optional. And there have been two arrests for vehicle break-ins at Seven Bridges; these individuals were tied to earlier break-ins in Grant Park and other parks as well. A BB gun was reported in the park last month. The homeless "Rasta man" is still camping somewhere in the park, although an encampment in Warnimont Park was dismantled by the sheriff's department.

Sheriff David Clarke and County Executive Chris Abele disagree on how to best manage the budget for the county regarding the Targeted Enforcement Units that now patrol the parks. With 15,000 acres in the parks covering 10% of the county to patrol, Abele's budget reduced the sheriff's patrols to 8 shifts for the entire county. Perhaps we could pen a letter to the county executive voicing our concerns for the park?

Our county natural areas coordinators Brian Russart, Julia Robson and Lea Cutsforth addressed the group, sharing their achievements for the year and their goals for the next year. Having received a \$50,300 grant from the Fund for Lake Michigan along with Sustain our Great Lakes, partnered with the Alliance for the Great Lakes, they were able to install a rain garden in parking lot area 1, planting 3,200 native species plugs. Also habitat issues were assessed. A native prairie planting was started (preceeded by spraying of herbicide to kill off the grass), and will continue next year. These projects came in under budget (using lots of SCA and Americorps volunteers), with \$22,000 remaining. Expect 3 educational signs to enlighten park visitors about the natural area restorations and habitats. The washout area at picnic area 2, near the bluff, will gain from new trees planted there. (We asked if the storm sewer will be repaired first, raising the old FEMA grant money promise to fix that. Brian didn't know, but would ask.) Americorps volunteers built the natural "wattle" fence along the bluff near the lake, and worked on invasive species control.

Lea Cutsforth, a Milwaukee County Parks biologist, told us there is great turtle diversity in the park, including the Mill Pond. Unfortunately, there are invasive aquatic species as well. Most invasive aquatic species come from people dumping aquariums into the watershed. Wildlife issues are a major part of the management plans; data on E-bird site regards bird surveys, SWIMS for aquatic surveys. 150 species of plants in Grant Park were recorded. Long term plans for the next year and beyond: restore the bluffs, remove invasive species on bluffs (scotch pines!).

Don Bulley informed us of a meeting of the Wind Point/Root River Watershed Initiative. They will begin activities here. The meeting is Thursday, Oct, 16th at South Milwaukee City Hall, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friends of the Mill Pond Clean-up of Oak Creek will be on Saturday, Oct. 12th at 9 a.m.; meet at the South Milwaukee high school parking lot; clean-up to remove garbage and trash.

Someone asked why there were so few geese at the Mill Pond. Geese and goslings are removed by permit of the DNR due to close proximity to the airport to prevent collisions.

Tree planting is scheduled for Grant Park for the last week in October. 783 potted trees & plants including a mix of dogwood, pagoda, sumac, ironwood, and musclewood will go in. All species are native to Wisconsin. Some are 8' to 10' tall and cost \$10 each. Volunteers helping with the planting include cross country teams. The trees will be delivered Oct. 29 or 30th.

We discussed fund raising in the form of a natural canvas shopping tote, screen printed with Friends of Grant Park, and the feasibility of profit from their sale.

Signs for our bluff restoration area should be created using funds leftover from the grant we received from Southeast Wisconsin Watershed Trust.

20 bluebird babies were fledged from our bluebird trail this past summer, but last year we had 37.

Our next meeting is Thursday, Nov. 14th, along with other friends groups at the South Shore Park pavilion.

Respectfully submitted by  
Jody Johnson