

Greenway Technical Committee (GTC)
Meeting Notes
Tuesday, November 12, 2013 - 10:30 am- Noon
Grand Forks Park District Office, 1210-7th Ave. S. Grand Forks, ND

Catherine Johnson, RRSRA
Dave Aker, EGF Parks & Recreation
Dave Manthei, GF Fire Dept.
Tom Reiten
Bill Palmiscno, GF Park District

Melanie Parvey, City of GF
Stephanie Erickson, MPO
Kim Greendahl, City of GF

I. Old Business

a. Project request updates

- i. Boathouse:** The use agreement between the City of GF and Ground Up Adventures (GUA) has been signed. GUA is working with JLG Architects on the design of the facility and ground. The site plans have been submitted to Inspections Department for approval. The containers that will be used for the office and storage are at the Public Works facility. The Park District has committed to \$1,500 for first year of operations and \$650 from the Ulland Grant funds for the paddle club.

II. New Business

- a. Cross County Ski Trails:** There is a new trail near the detention pond south of Lincoln Drive Park. This trail has a steep slope at one end and may be a problem for some skiers. We do have the option to groom the old route as an alternative. Wooden posts have been installed along the lower trails in GF. These posts will be used for posting signs of seasonal trail use, like skiing, no snowmobiles, hiking, etc. EGF is looking at contracting J&G Landscaping to groom a trail in the campground.
- b. Winter Recreation Area:** EGF is working with possible areas for alternative winter recreational opportunities like a skating trail on the streets in the campground. Dave is looking at doing an ice trail in Stauss Park this year as a test run. A warming house is needed at the campground or River Heights area before it could be developed into a winter park. GOA has expressed an interest in loaning their storage containers from the boathouse as a potential warming house. The bikecicle ice race is on Saturday, February 15, the same day as the Frozen Feat and Greenway Ski Days. Other events might want to do something on the same day. A vintage snowmobile event will be in downtown EGF on Saturday, February 8.
- c. Vegetation Management Plan:** Kim shared information from her presentation to the local Audubon group and the vegetation plan that is posted on the Greenway website. The presentation highlighted work that was done in areas such as Kannowski Park and the Elmwood access area. The biggest problem has been the burdock. The Power Point presentation addresses each area and what's been done and what still needs to be done to improve the vegetation. Mr. Reiten expressed his concern for the thistle that has grown in the Sunbeam area. He is concerned that if it isn't taken care of before it goes to seed then it can affect residential areas. Weed control is happening in that area but variables such as how high the water comes up, how fast it recedes, and how wet or dry it is in the beginning of the growing season effect when the spraying will take place.
- d. Greenway & Trail Users Advisory Group update:** The group will meet this evening at 7PM. Items to discuss include: a review of the green lane project and how well it has worked and the Bike Friendly Application

III. Greenway Agency Updates

- a. City of EGF:** Winterizing the restrooms and fountains for the season.
- b. GF Park District:** Preparing for ice skating rinks to be flooded later this month.

- c. **City of Grand Forks:** Looking at the Joint Powers Agreement with the Park District for Riverside Pool beginning early next year.
- d. **MN DNR:** Had over 2,000 campers, traffic count was down which mean more campers were coming and staying. There is also more interest in outdoor activities looking at ideas such as a parade for Memorial Day and a haunted sleigh ride in the fall. The Open House is the first week-end in June but might do this Memorial Day week-nd instead so there is something going on in town.
- e. **MPO:** Bike pedestrian plan got final approval from GF Council. This plan is part of the Long Range Transportation Plan for 2040. A bridge crossing at 47th is in the plan but isn't the priority right now.

IV. Other

- a. **Greenway Promotions Fund:** GF Park District has asked the City of Grand Forks to host this fund for the Greenway Technical Committee, Melanie will work with Bill on getting this set up and funds transferred over.
- b. **Special Events storage issue:** Kim hosted a discussion with all of the Special Event planners to look at things like storage and sharing equipment. This resulted in them talking and working together on these items instead of asking the City to help in these areas.
- c. **New bike lane on 47th Avenue South:** Mr. Rieten inquired about the lane that was put in along 47th Ave. and how people can't park on either side. He was asked to connect with Jane Williams, Traffic Engineer, to discuss concerns and thoughts on this feature.

V. Next Greenway Technical Committee meeting: Tuesday, January 14, 2013 – 10:30 am at Grand Forks Park District, 1210 7th Avenue South

VI. Adjournment

Submitted by: Karen Salwey, Public Works Sr. Administrative Specialist, City of Grand Forks

Supporting documents: Grand Forks Vegetation Management Plan

Power Point presentation: The Greenway-in a Natural State

Grand Forks Greenway Vegetation Management General Plan and Policies

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Mowing and Maintenance
 - a. Debris removal
- III. Trees
 - a. Large scale plantings
 - b. Small scale plantings
 - c. Reforestation
 - d. Maintenance
- IV. Weed Control
 - a. Common weeds
 - b. Noxious weeds
- V. Riparian Management
- VI. Landscaping
- VII. Recommended Planting List- Trees, Shrubs, and Grasses
- VIII. Partners and Resources

Executive Summary

The primary function of the Greenway is to serve as a floodplain to allow the flow of high water through Greater Grand Forks. Fortunately this occurs on an infrequent basis and during times of normal water flow the Greenway provides seemingly endless opportunities for recreation and outdoor enjoyment.

The management of the Greenway requires a delicate balance of preserving and restoring the natural setting of the facility while continuing to provide recreational opportunities for park users. Best practices for vegetation management may not always be compatible with visitor services or access, but are necessary components to any long range planning. The function of the area is the main criteria for determining maintenance plans.

Overall maintenance of the Greenway is done by two agencies: the City of GF and the GF Park District. The City of Grand Forks owns all the land in the North Dakota portion of the Greenway. The Grand Forks Park District manages four of these areas. These areas include Riverside, Kannowski and Lincoln Drive Parks and Lincoln Golf Course. The City of Grand Forks manages and maintains all other areas on the North Dakota side.

The goals of the vegetation management plan are:

- Provide guidelines for vegetation management decisions
- Maintain a functional flood protection system for the protection of the community
- Provide both natural and manicured areas for the enjoyment of greenway visitors and wildlife
- Restore/build natural bank stabilization through vegetation

Mowing

The Grand Forks portion of the Greenway includes approximately 900 acres of natural green space that requires a wide variety of maintenance levels. The criteria used for determining maintenance levels are the effects on bank stabilization, flood control, how the area is used, best management practices and cost.

Guidelines:

- a. All high recreation areas, including the downtown area, are mowed on a regular rotation, as weather and soil conditions permit, to maintain a reasonable grass height. Saturated soil or forecasted dry weather may cause the alteration of mowing plans.
- b. Mowing begins at the north or south end of the Greenway and continues the entire length of the project until completed. Special exception may be given for community special events or areas missed during previous mowings because of special circumstances.
- c. Spot mowing in a specific area is done only as necessary.
- d. Some areas will either be revegetated or left in a natural state with periodic maintenance to remove weeds or diseased tree species. These areas include, but are not limited to, most riverbank property.

Debris Removal

The winding path of the Red River creates plenty of opportunity for debris to collect along the riverbank. Although this debris may be unsightly to some, fallen trees can provide habitat for birds and other wildlife as they travel through or live in the Greenway. Most debris piles will not be removed unless there is concern for damage to other property or person, or the debris impedes the natural flow of water.

Trees

Trees and shrubs play an important role in the natural beauty of the Greenway as well as environmental benefits for our community. Erosion control, removal of carbon dioxide and reduction of carbon emissions are just a few of the benefits of maintaining healthy vegetation in the Greenway.

The Greenway is home to more than 76 species of trees. A Tree Inventory Report and Management Plan was conducted by ACRT, Inc. in 1998 on behalf of the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization. Inventory, maintenance needs, and urban forestry management are addressed in this report.

Trees located in areas of the Greenway managed by the GF Park District are maintained by that agency at no cost to the City of Grand Forks. The GF Park District also provides general advisement on tree management for all other areas.

Guidelines:

- a. Old and decaying trees are removed when they pose a safety hazard.
- b. Care will be taken to maintain the road corridors left behind from the removal of the homes in Lincoln Drive Park to be a reminder of the former neighborhood.

Large scale plantings

During the construction of the flood protection project, some tree plantings were removed from the Phase II and III design plans as a cost saving measure. Private and foundation funding has provided opportunities to reinstate some of these planting projects and staff continues to pursue funding from a variety of sources to replace these eliminated trees.

The criteria used for pursuing tree planting projects are the need to replenish old or damaged stock, provide a visual buffer and/or the need to provide erosion control along the riverbank. Greenway staff works with the Grand Forks Park District and contracted staff to determine planting needs.

Greenway Tree Planting Program

The Greenway attracts a wide variety of visitors and is a special place for many. Each year several trees are planted within the project in memory of loved ones or mark a special occasion or location. The Greenway Tree Planting program offers an opportunity for Greenway users to purchase a living, growing memorial for a loved one or special occasion to be planted in the Greenway.

Weed Control

Weed control is an area that generates considerable discussion among greenway users. A desire for weed free areas, differing ideas on what constitutes a weed and community concerns about the use of chemicals in public areas are all topics of concern.

Like any lawn or garden the Greenway experiences fluctuations in weed frequency. The biggest obstacle for creating a weed free area is the function of the Greenway as floodplain in which high water brings weed seeds that are left behind after waters recede. Even with the most comprehensive spray program, providing and maintaining weed free environment in the Greenway will not be achievable.

Weed categories**Common weeds**

Dandelions are the most common weeds found in the Greenway. The City of Grand Forks contracts for herbicide spraying to combat the problem. Spraying is done on an as needed basis.

Noxious weeds

Noxious weeds are described as any species of plants "which when established is or may become destructive and difficult to control by ordinary means of

cultivation or other farm practices." Noxious weeds have a high capacity for destruction and can be difficult to control or remove.

Riparian management

Riparian restoration provides the opportunity to develop semi-natural areas in the Greenway that provide vegetation for stability to riverbanks susceptible to erosion. Some of the benefits of riparian restoration include bank stabilization, creating wildlife habitats, increased recreational opportunities as well providing a filter from pollution from runoff into the Red River.

A riverbank stabilization and wildflower restoration project was started in 2005 in several areas along the Red River in the Greenway. Funding for the project was received from Red River Regional Council- Red River Basin Riparian Project, which includes North Dakota Forest Service and the Energy & Environmental Research Center as well as North Dakota Game & Fish Department. Funds from the City of Grand Forks were also used. Staff has been monitoring the success of these projects for reference on future projects.

Vegetation management activities to maintain the native grasses within the restoration areas will include mowing, burning, and use of herbicides to assist in the control of noxious weeds. Though mowing may be required on a periodic basis, frequent mowing, fertilizing, and pest control will not be necessary to maintain the restoration areas.

Landscaping

Flower beds and shrubbery are located at trailhead facilities throughout the project. The Grand Forks Park District provides the maintenance of the landscaping located within areas managed by their agency. All other landscaping is completed through contracted labor at the direction of greenway staff.

Partners and Resources

Greenway staff relies on many partners for information and recommendations regarding vegetation management. Some of the partners include:

- Grand Forks Park District
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- North Dakota Parks & Recreation – Turtle River State Park
- NDSU Extension Office

The Greenway – In a Natural State

Kim Greendahl, Greenway Specialist

City of Grand Forks, ND

October 17, 2013

What is the Greenway?

In Greater Grand Forks the Greenway is defined as the approximately 2,200 acres of natural space located between the levee system and the banks of the Red and Red Lake Rivers.

The original plan

There were many discussions about levels of maintenance for the Greenway. Early plans were to allow the entire area to grow naturally. This idea was abandoned in favor of a more balanced system.

Prior to 1997 the banks of the Red River were a mismatched system of ownership with no cohesive plan for vegetation management.

Some areas were manicured almost to the river while some were left to grow unrestricted.

Some public areas had been used as illegal dumping sites. Several businesses were housed along the banks.

Finding a balance

Many factors are considered when planning the vegetation within the Greenway. This can be a difficult balancing act at times.

- Floodplain
- Community expectations
- Recreational uses
- Financial obligations
- Vandalism

What's been done so far?

- Developed a general vegetation management plan and policy
- Began implementing some of the policies in 2005 in select areas.
- Most management is done through mowing, herbicide spraying, the planting of trees and natural grasses, and allowing for natural growth.

The background of the slide is a solid green color with a subtle gradient. Scattered across the background are numerous white butterfly silhouettes of various sizes and orientations, creating a decorative and nature-themed aesthetic.

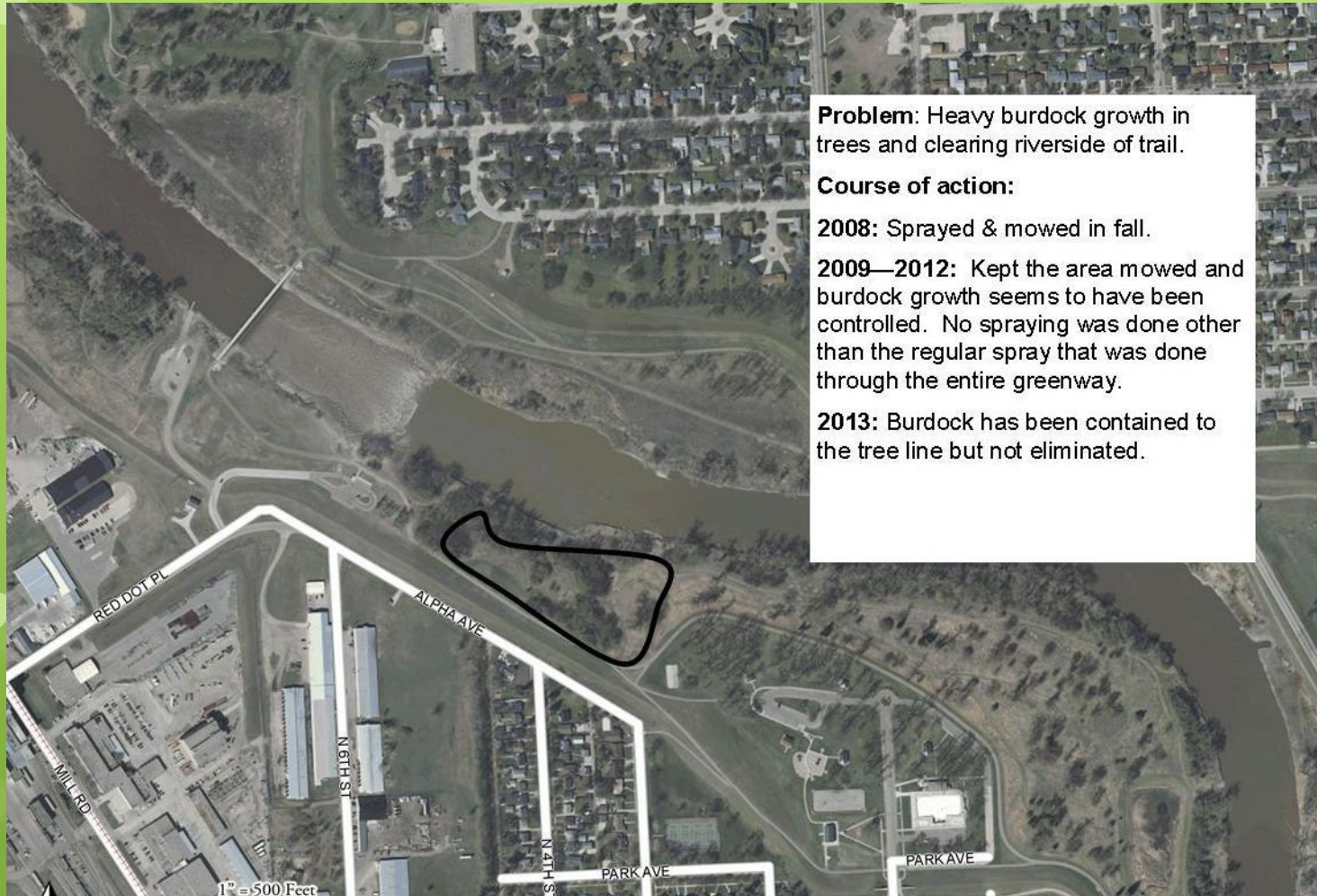
THE GOAL:

Our communities restored and protected from future flooding

THE BONUS:

The opportunity to create a recreation facility in a natural space located in an urban setting

Riverside Dam to Riverside Park



Problem: Heavy burdock growth in trees and clearing riverside of trail.

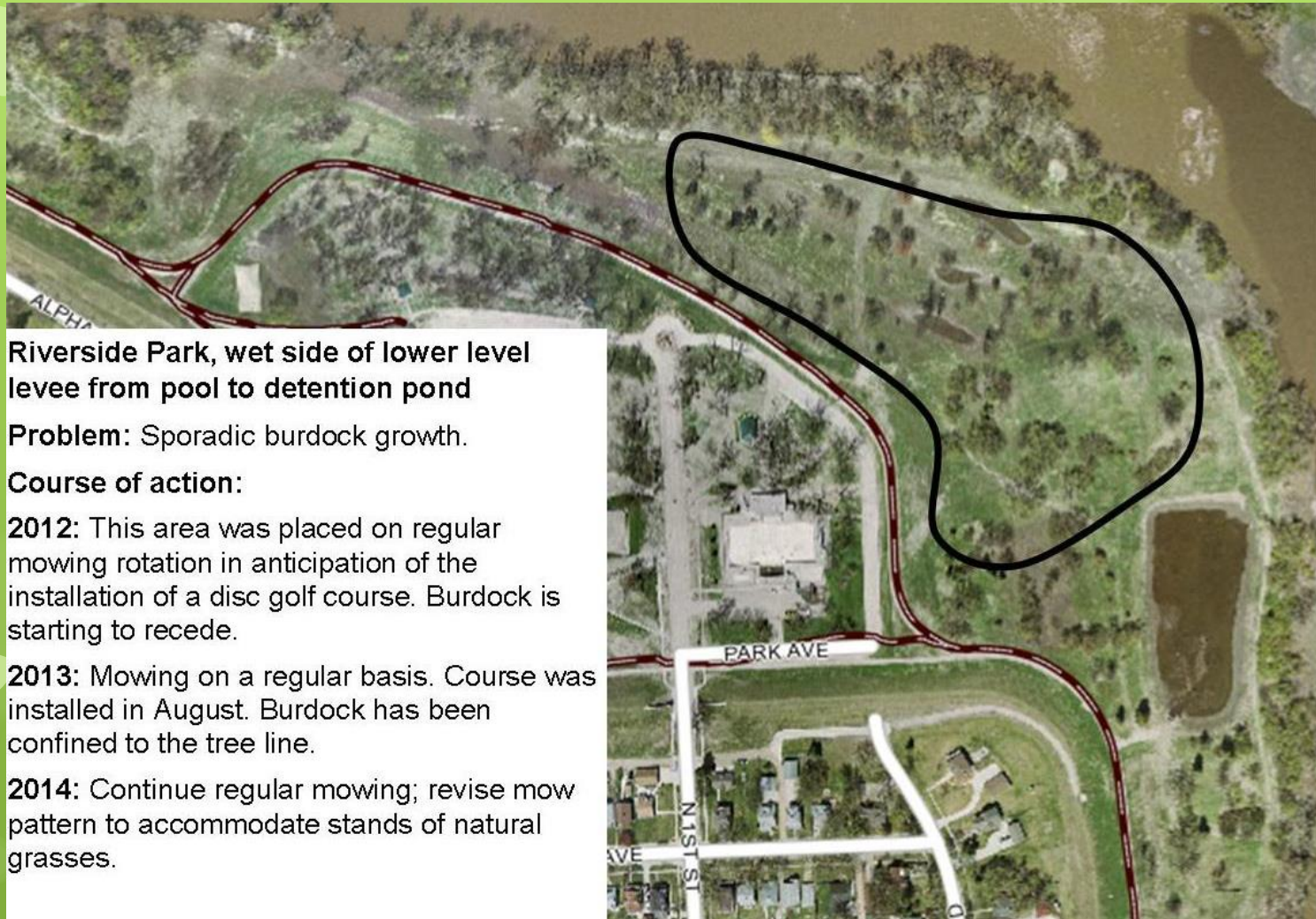
Course of action:

2008: Sprayed & mowed in fall.

2009—2012: Kept the area mowed and burdock growth seems to have been controlled. No spraying was done other than the regular spray that was done through the entire greenway.

2013: Burdock has been contained to the tree line but not eliminated.

RIVERSIDE PARK



Riverside Park, wet side of lower level levee from pool to detention pond

Problem: Sporadic burdock growth.

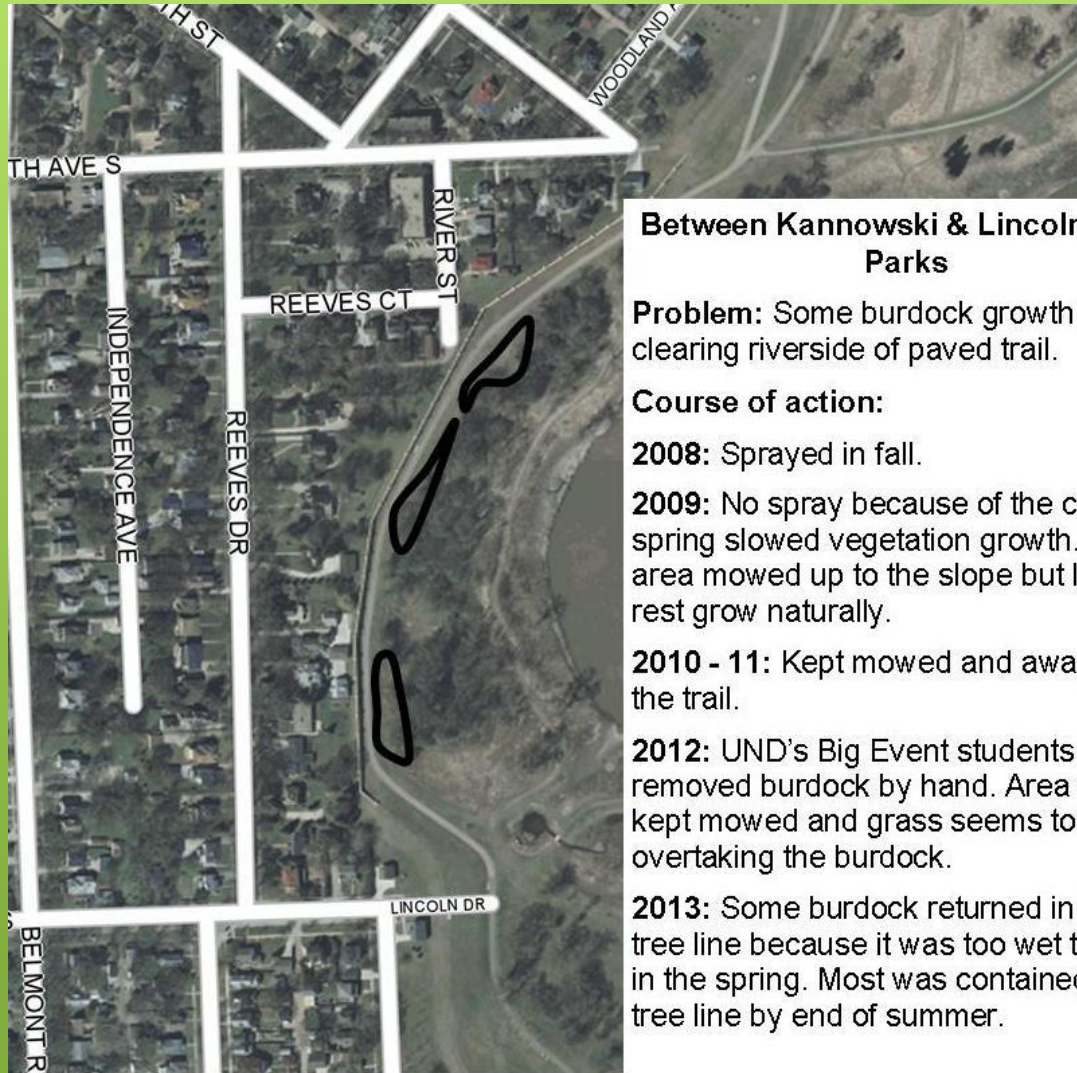
Course of action:

2012: This area was placed on regular mowing rotation in anticipation of the installation of a disc golf course. Burdock is starting to recede.

2013: Mowing on a regular basis. Course was installed in August. Burdock has been confined to the tree line.

2014: Continue regular mowing; revise mow pattern to accommodate stands of natural grasses.

Kannowski & Lincoln Drive Park



Between Kannowski & Lincoln Drive Parks

Problem: Some burdock growth in tree clearing riverside of paved trail.

Course of action:

2008: Sprayed in fall.

2009: No spray because of the cold wet spring slowed vegetation growth. Kept area mowed up to the slope but let the rest grow naturally.

2010 - 11: Kept mowed and away from the trail.

2012: UND's Big Event students removed burdock by hand. Area was kept mowed and grass seems to be overtaking the burdock.

2013: Some burdock returned in the tree line because it was too wet to mow in the spring. Most was contained to tree line by end of summer.

Elmwood Access (32nd Avenue South)



Elmwood Access

Problem: Burdock growing in the area close to the trail.

Course of action: Combination of mow, spray, and natural growth

2005: Trees planted along riverbank.

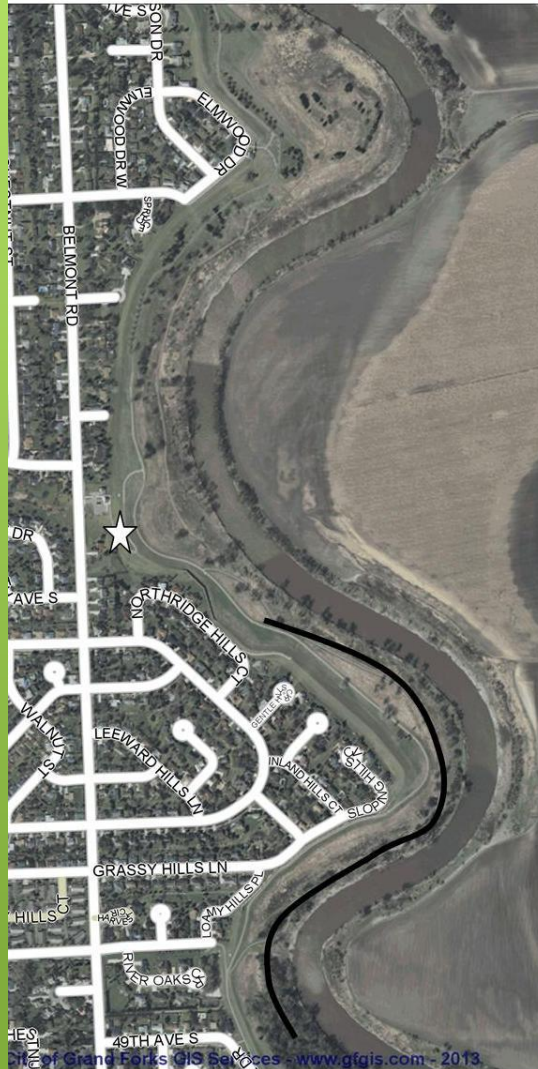
2008: Mowed some areas in fall in preparation for spring spray.

2009: Did not mow past the first bluff from the trail in spring 2009 because of high water.

2011 - 2012: New trees are starting to pop up in the lower area between the mowed area and the river. Will not mow that area to encourage the tree growth. Nothing has been mowed past the lower area for several years to discourage snowmobile activity.

2013: Same. Consider adding a nature trail in 2014.

Sunbeam trail head area



Sunbeam Upper & Lower Trails

Problem: Curly doc, burdock, and thistle between trails.

Course of action: Mowing, spraying, natural growth

2008: Mowed in fall for spring spray.

2009: Too wet to spray..

2010: Did not mow the lower area but did expand the mowing strip closer to the trail to knock down Burdock and Canadian Thistle that was getting tall.

Volunteer tree growth beginning.

2012: Extended the mow line down the slope to deal with Canola growth. Sprayed for Canola in fall.

2013: Sprayed in late July. Some success but probably needs a few rounds of spraying over time.

2014: Consider one time mow on northern section in spring, spray, then let grow for the rest of season. Possibly mow a wider swatch riverward of lower trail. Clean out vegetation at the northern intersection. Continue to clean out area south of 47th Avenue South.

The Greenway features

- 5 parks
- 9 trail head facilities
- 2 golf courses; 1-18 hole and 1-9 hole
- 4 boat ramps
- Campground
- 4 disc golf courses; 2-18 holes and 2-12 holes
- Wildflower gardens
- Wildlife viewing areas
- Playgrounds
- Basketball courts
- Tennis courts
- Historical interpretive pieces
- Softball fields
- Sand volleyball
- Horseshoe pits

- 
- Ice skating rinks
 - Sledding hills
 - Cross country ski trails
 - Snowmobile trails
 - Dog park
 - And more to come!







THE GREENWAY

GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS

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