PROJECT PROFILE

OCTOBER 2014 PRESCRIBED BURN

AT THE ANOKA NATURE PRESERVE

Ecological Restoration

Project Background

Grants have been used to treat and harvest invasive species to restore oak woodland and savanna. Restoration efforts in 2012-2013 include the application of herbicide to kill undesirable tree and shrub species and the mechanical removal of treated trees and shrubs. In 2014, a prescribed burn and additional herbicide application to kill missed and newly sprouted trees and shrubs is planned. Target species for treatment include common buckthorn, prickly ash, tartarian honeysuckle, Siberian elm, black locust, and eastern red cedar.

Need for the Burn

Since the treatment and harvest of much of the invasive woody plants, the smaller seedlings that weren't practical to treat, as well as newly germinated seedlings have flourished. This was expected but needs to be combatted to prevent immediate re-infestation of the forest. The most cost-effective way to kill buckthorn seedlings is through the use of a prescribed burn. Prescribed burns are low to the ground and move slowly through the understory ridding the area of excess thatch and woody debris as well as killing small trees and seedlings. Supplemental herbicide applications will likely be necessary where the use of fire is not practical. Larger trees, particularly Bur Oak, are very resistant to fire and will not be harmed during the process.

Project Partners

Funds were provided from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) of the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment through the Anoka Sand Plain Partnership as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) with matching funds from the City of Anoka. The project concept was a joint effort by the City of Anoka and the Anoka Conservation District (ACD). Promotion, oversight, and project coordination was provided by the ACD.

Safety First

MN Native Landscapes is under contract to complete the burn. MNL has extensive experience with prescribed burns. They are well-equipped with personal safety equipment to protect crews as well as water trucks to contain the fire. The broad park trails will serve as ideal fire-breaks to impede the spread of the fire, as will the farm field to the east of the woodland. Fire will not be allowed to progress toward the homes to the north, northeast or south of the project area. In order for the burn to occur, wind speeds must be low, wind direction can't cause drifting smoke to create driving hazards, humidity levels must be low, and ground moisture must be low. **The public is asked to remain clear of the area during the burn and for 48 hours**

During

After

What to Expect

Prior to the burn, additional fire-breaks will be installed by tilling/dozing swaths along the edge of planned burn area. On the day of the burn, crews will arrive with water trucks and other safety equipment. Intentional fires will be set on the downwind side of the project so that the fire must fight against the wind in order to move through the woods; this ensures that it can't grow out of control.

When to Expect it

The burn should only take one day to complete but crews will be around for the follow two days to dowse smoldering embers. The burn is scheduled to occur on the week of October 20 (preferred) or October 27 (backup) provided site conditions are not suitable.

Where to Expect it

The prescribed burn will be limited to the areas outlined in red on the map. Funding limitations and site conditions may reduce the burn limits further.