

MITCHELL BOULEVARD PARK UPDATE

By Sup. De Bruin

Controlled burn of invasive weeds:

The Parks Department was verbally notified yesterday that their variance application was approved. Documentation should be received today. The controlled burn will be conducted in mid-late November with the day being dependent upon the right wind and humidity conditions. The burn requires low humidity and either no wind or low wind from a direction that would direct the flow of smoke away from the neighborhood homes aligning the park and away from the freeway. Smoke flow could reduce driving visibility and irritate individuals' respiratory systems, so burns are done in a manner to produce smoke flows away from human beings and car traffic. The date of the burn is dependent upon these two atmospheric conditions.

The burn will start in the morning and be finished by early afternoon. Parks invasive weed staff and Wehr Nature Center staff will conduct the burn. There may be some Parks staff from other parks in attendance to learn the procedure. Conducting the burn may require that Mitchell Boulevard Road be closed temporarily. A decision to temporarily close the park will be made in conjunction with the neighborhood and once a decision on whether a burn of the eastern park section north of the tree groves will be done.

The western side of the park is well established with wildflowers but a burn is necessary to reduce the dramatic increase in invasive weeds in that area. The burn will kill active seedlings- this time of year the only active seedlings are invasive weeds, such as buck thorn. Larger material will still need to be removed by hand. Next spring, the area will be reassessed. It is anticipated that a back to back burn might be required but it is possible that the west side will only need a burn every other year or every third year. Once the area is considered fully established, a burn could occur every five years. In areas less established, a back to back burn might be needed (a fall burn two years in a row) to achieve maximum result.

The Parks Department will be assessing the eastern area north of the tree grove for burn desirability. This area is smaller and could benefit from a burn. The Department will need to assess whether a burn here should occur this year, whether it should include the tree grove under story, wind flow issues, etc. and will let my office know their recommendations shortly.

Bathrooms

The bathrooms will re-open this spring. The pavilion's bathrooms are shut down this time of the year due to the pavilion being unheated.

Summer Concert Idea

The Board just approved a budget amendment I sponsored to expand county funding for the Concert in the Parks series to include smaller non-band shell parks in 2006. This means that smaller parks, like MBP, could host a jazz or other type of concert if the neighborhood is willing to assist in planning for the event. The Parks Department would pay for some or all of the band costs, depending upon the level of cost and the level of participation that other park neighborhoods request in the program. I am excited about this possibility for MBP and want to know the neighborhood's interest level. The Parks Department and I would need volunteers to work with us to plan, pick the entertainment, coordinate, and publicize the event.

Tree viability due to summer draught

This summer's dry weather caused many of MBP's young trees to go dormant and some have probably died. In early spring 2006, the Parks Department will determine which trees have actually died and then begin replacing dead trees. Some trees are best replaced in spring; some in fall. Depending upon the type and number of trees needing replacement, all dead trees should be replaced from county nursery stock or outside purchase in 2006 or by spring 2007.