

## Scott Gustin

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**Subject:** FW: Electronic Copy of Tree Maintenance Plan submission?

**From:** Dan Cahill

**Sent:** Monday, September 28, 2015 1:34 PM

**To:** Scott Gustin <[SGustin@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:SGustin@burlingtonvt.gov)>

**Cc:** Jesse Bridges <[jbridges@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:jbridges@burlingtonvt.gov)>; Alicia Daniel <[adaniel@uvm.edu](mailto:adaniel@uvm.edu)>; 'Alicia Daniel' <[alicia.daniel@uvm.edu](mailto:alicia.daniel@uvm.edu)>

**Subject:** Re: Electronic Copy of Tree Maintenance Plan submission?

Scott,

The forestry plan is a good start. However this land is a prospective future park, with significant conservation value, and therefore management and planning on and for this land should align with the City's Open Space Protection Plan. Moving forward with cutting and thinning at this time would pose significant threat to known rare and endangered species as well as wildlife habitat. The Greenleaf report is missing a full natural resource inventory and assessment, including a review and assessment of natural community types. From a conservation perspective, it is critical that we have the opportunity to perform this assessment work prior to major planned thinning and cutting.

Areas within the report where I see issues are:

- Function/goal number four on page two that states "make it a clear walk-able forest" which *not* a goal for a wildlife corridor.

There is mention of wildlife management on the same page, but nowhere in the report do I see an understanding that wildlife (foxes, rabbits, ground nesting birds, etc.) need brushy, unkempt forest floors for shelter. Most of the discussion about wildlife focuses on mast trees and snags, which are also important.

- Also from the wildlife perspective, language on page 6 paragraph 2 "tree crowns will be lifted and thinned to reduce wind 'sail,' thus minimizing the potential for wind damage." Although consideration of wind damage is important, this analysis disregards the importance of layering in the canopy which is critical for songbird niches.

- The Greenleaf report (with its focus on trees) barely touches on the herbaceous layer. For instance, we identified Harsh Sunflower as a species of interest on the site and it does not appear in the Greenleaf report. There may well be other species of interest to the City that were not included.

In this report, the trees are described in forest stand terms, which means that there is no discussion of natural communities including, the Pine-Oak-Heath Sandplain Forest. Instead, that area is labeled Red Oak. Natural community analysis and consideration is a key element of the Open Space Protection Plan.

I propose that natural resource inventory work commence this fall, and continue it into spring of next year. By June of 2016 an adequate natural resource inventory can be completed and a more comprehensive management protocol for the property can be adopted. BPRW staff are available and able to complete the

necessary inventory work. At the very least I recommend that BPRW staff is included in the scope and oversight of this work.

Sincerely,

Dan Cahill, CPRP  
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## Scott Gustin

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**From:** Warren Spinner  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 29, 2015 2:47 PM  
**To:** Scott Gustin  
**Cc:** Jesse Bridges; Dan Cahill; Alicia Daniel (adaniel@uvm.edu)  
**Subject:** RE: Electronic Copy of Tree Maintenance Plan submission?

Hi Scott,

I have reviewed the draft tree maintenance plan for the BCCH property. The plan address the forestry/tree related issues and recommends several management objectives. This area is a section of Fragmented Forest that was left as the land was developed around it over the past several years. The Greenleaf Consulting Inc. plan will be the first professional forestry management of this property. Well this plan doesn't address all of our department wishes I think it's a good start to managing the property's forest.

Other plan comments:

I was pleased to see the plans aggressive approach to managing invasive species within the forested areas. This is a department management goal for our park property as well.

In the introduction it states "A clean walkable forest with views of the lake". My thought is for the trail/paths that are eventually developed on the property would be fine and views where possible without removing several trees to accomplish it. One might interpret this to mean clean uninterrupted walking through the entire forested area. I don't think that's what the plan intends.

Hazard and dead trees in the 5 management areas – Yes it is important to remove dead and hazard trees where they can fall into a trail/path but where there is no threat to public safety I would recommend leaving some for wildlife habitat trees.

I agree with removing deadwood from the trees especially near trails and paths. I don't see why lifting or reducing trees crown's/canopy's is needed to reduce wind/sail effects. This is a forested area the trees have been working together as a group/unit for years actually protecting each other from this happening. I understand crown reduction or thinning for single or small groups of trees.

Again I'm pleased to see a management plan for this property and think it's a great start for managing this area.

Best, Warren



**Warren Spinner, Certified Arborist**

City Arborist

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## **NATURAL RESOURCES INFORMATION: SITE CONDITIONS & FLORA**

From the perspective of the Nongame and Natural Heritage Program, this site has several interesting to significant features. Although the sand beach is highly disturbed by human use and the rock fill for the bikepath, this is a continuation of North Beach and is still a site of statewide significance. Lake sand beach is considered a rare natural community type in Vermont, and all of our examples are degraded.

The whole site above the bike path is part of the Winooski River mouth sand delta, formed thousands of years ago during the period when Lake Champlain was a much larger lake and then a saltwater sea. This delta has deep sands that were deposited in shallow water at the mouth of the formerly larger lake/sea. These deep sands are mapped as Adams Windsor B on the NRCS soil survey for Chittenden County. This is the setting for another very rare natural community type in Vermont - the pine-oak-heath sandplain forest.

The Diocese site has been highly manipulated in the past and the only place where there is a small remnant of this rare forest type is in the northwest corner of the site. Here there are red oaks, red maple, white birch and other species characteristic of the community type. This remnant is too small to be considered of statewide significance, but is interesting none-the-less and may be considered significant at the local level. Restoration of sandplain forest on this site would be a very difficult undertaking, especially considering its small size and the abundance of exotic species at the site (Norway maple, black locust, buckthorns, and honeysuckle), however sandplain characteristics would increase and persist over time.

The western edge of the delta on this property forms an impressive bluff overlooking Lake Champlain. This bluff and the adjacent top of the delta strike me as a very significant natural area for the city. This bluff is mostly forested and over time it seems that it would be possible to reduce the abundance of exotic species and encourage native trees, shrubs, and herb. There are already numerous impressive red oaks and cottonwoods, and one white oak. It seems that there is high potential to manage the western side of the delta and the bluff as a natural area that could be enjoyed by many people in the city.

Submitted By:

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