



The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations, Inc.

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<http://www.mvcca.org>

Supervisor Dan Storck

Commissioner Gorham

Natural Resource Branch Manager John Burke

Nov 21, 2024

The MVCCA unanimously approved the attached resolution regarding the removal of invasive plants from Collingwood Park. Our members look forward to Park Authority actively removing these plants.

Katherine Ward
Cochair
MVCCA

Attached: Invasive Plant Management in Collingwood Park (MVCCA E&R 2024-04) Resolution with photos and invasive plant list

MOUNT VERNON COUNCIL OF CITIZENS' ASSOCIATIONS (MVCCA)

Resolution on Invasive Plant Management in Collingwood Park (MVCCA E&R 2024-04)

Whereas, Collingwood Park is a neighborhood park in the Mount Vernon District of Fairfax County and borders the George Washington Memorial Parkway, a national park;

Whereas, users of the park come from neighborhoods throughout Mount Vernon District, as well as from other districts in the County to play various sports including soccer, softball, baseball and court games;

Whereas, the Fairfax County Park Authority's (FCPA) apparent prioritization of high ecological value parks, like Huntley Meadow, for invasive vegetation control is important, small neighborhood parks, like Collingwood Park, receive minimal if any invasive vegetation control;

Whereas, FCPA's volunteer Invasive Management Area (IMA) program is limited in the number of parks and the type of invasive plant control it can address, it leaves Collingwood Park and others unaddressed by IMA volunteers;

Whereas, while FCPA's funding for the IMA program, which comes from both the General Fund and an annual Environmental Incentive Program (EIP) grant, IMA volunteer numbers are dependent upon permanent staff positions funded by the General Fund, which limits the number of parks that can be addressed by IMA volunteers;

Whereas, the NOVA Tree Rescuers program is a promising program, it has not reached Collingwood Park and probably many other parks;

Whereas, both children and adults use the fields in this park and many of their balls become tangled in the invasive plants along the edges of the park and cannot be safely retrieved;

Whereas, trash also gets caught in these invasive plants, looks unsightly and can attract pests and harm wildlife;

Whereas, the native trees are being strangled by these invasive plants, many of which have already died and can be a hazard, on one recent occasion a very large dead tree fell near neighbors as they were walking by;

Whereas, invasive plants generally outcompete more valuable native plants and impair natural habitats;

Whereas, the Park Authority does not have the funding to care for neighborhood parks other than mowing the grass, this park is NOT maintained as it should be; and

Whereas, neither the Park Authority nor the Urban Forestry department have adequate permanent staff, both workers and management, or funding in their regular budget to manage invasive plants and restore the ecological integrity of neighborhood parks.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Park Authority should aggressively pursue grants from both public and private foundations and other sources to combat invasives in Collingwood Park;

Be it further resolved that the Park Authority should take immediate action to preserve and restore the native environmental habitat of existing parks;

Be it further resolved that the Part Authority should analyze the advantages and disadvantages of using non-human, non-chemical approaches like sheep and goats to help with invasive plant control where appropriate;

Be it further resolved that the Park Authority should make neighborhood parks, like Collingwood Park, that are not receiving sufficient invasive vegetation management, open to trained volunteers and/or organizations to perform invasive vegetation control;

Be it further resolved that the BOS should increase funding and permanent staff positions to initiate, expand and manage invasive plant control, and the Park Authority should hire qualified staff to strengthen management of the ecological condition of neighborhood parks, such as Collingwood Park;

Be it finally resolved that the Park Authority should consider Collingwood Park, because of its high -volume usage and proximity to a national park, the George Washington Memorial Parkway, as a pilot program for invasive plant management and the removal and reestablishment of native plant species and use the results to expand invasive plant control in all county parks.

Approved by the MVCCA General Council Nov 20, 2024

Collingwood Park photos



Photos of invasives in Collingwood Park. Invasives are taking over the park so that natural areas that are being taken over by invasive plants can no longer support the native wildlife and insects that are native to the area. Invasive plants within the park boundaries include, but not limited to: English Ivy, bamboo, porcelain berry, Chinese privet, wintercreeper euonymus, sawtooth blackberry brambles.