



Frequently Asked Questions



What is the site?

The site is a 15-acre wooded property owned by the Village of Brookfield located directly south of the BNSF railroad tracks from the Village Hall and Kiwanis Park, east of the Salt Creek, and west of the South Hollywood Neighborhood. The Village purchased this land along with Kiwanis Park from the City of Chicago in 1956.

Why is it important to ecologically restore the site?

The site is one of the few undeveloped natural areas left in our area. It contains a rare stand of century-old oaks and many other native plant species. It also serves as a wetland area, providing valuable flood control for the Village.

Until recently, the site was overtaken by an invasive, thicket-forming shrub called buckthorn. Buckthorn outcompetes other native trees and plants, its roots release chemicals toxic to wildlife and other plants, and it can also contribute to erosion and standing water. Removing the buckthorn and encouraging native tree and plant growth helps restore a healthy functioning ecosystem. It also reduces the spread of this noxious and hard-to-eliminate weeds from backyards and public areas.

Additionally, oak savanna is considered one of the rarest ecosystems in North America and is deserving of thoughtful protection and stewardship.

How will restoring the site benefit Brookfield?

Ecological restoration helps restore native plant communities. The long and fibrous roots of native plants form a dense sponge that can store rainwater and help it slowly infiltrate back into the ground. Forests also have cooling effects on communities and help improve air quality by removing pollution and carbon dioxide from the air. Restoration benefits wildlife by providing food and habitat. Natural areas provide many health benefits to humans, including providing sites for outdoor recreation like walking.

Are you building a “park” on the site?

No, the site will remain a wooded natural area. The site is in a floodplain/wetland area, so a traditional park with mowed areas, pavement, playgrounds, or buildings is not feasible.



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Will it encourage more illicit activities at the park (teen parties etc.)?

One of the best ways to discourage unwanted activities at public parks is to encourage more positive ones. Removal of thick brush and increased visibility makes the area less appealing to individuals looking to hide their activity. The presence of dog walkers, hikers, or other intended visitors also makes the site less appealing for illicit use and increases the likelihood that suspicious activity will be reported. Since we've removed large stands of buckthorn shielding the site from view, we've seen a decrease in trash such as beer cans and other paraphernalia associated with unwanted uses.

Will there be cars parked in front of my house?

Vehicle parking needs for this site will be evaluated as part of the planning process with a goal of making use of existing infrastructure to accommodate parking.

How will the site change?

The Village and its volunteers will continue removing buckthorn and restoring a healthy woodland wetland area. Plans for the installation of trails and other related outdoor recreation amenities are being created.

What are the next steps?

A Task Force comprising of residents, local historians, commissioners, Village staff, and a National Park Service staff member is gathering community feedback on plans to install trails and other related amenities at the site. The Task Force will draw up a proposal based on community input with the Brookfield Conservation Commission. The plan will then be submitted for consideration by the Village Trustees.