

To: Town of Middleton, Park Commission
Prepared by: Stacey Marion, Adaptive Restoration LLC
Re: Approval of Spring 2019 Town Conservancies Management Activities
February 5, 2019

Objective: *Park Commission motion to recommend approval of spring 2019 conservancy work to the Town Board.*

We are excited to work with new Town staff with the shared goal of continued management and enhancement of the Town's natural areas.

Given changes to the Town's work approval procedures, we are seeking additional approval of our work for this spring (Page 3-5). We have several prescribed burns planned in Town conservancies, and would like to be able to jump on good burning weather when we are able! On-going management of conservancy areas, including but not limited to prescribed burning, is necessary to protect past investment made to these unique and priceless natural plant community restorations.

Over the past decade, the acres of restored natural communities in the Town of Middleton has increased, and the quality of these areas as habitat for pollinators, birds and mammals has increased. Many Conservancies (e.g. Noll Valley, Pope Farm, Cherrywood Forest) have completed development projects within the last few years and have transitioned to a long-term "maintenance" phase. Trends associated with the maintenance phase include: a holistic, park-wide approach to vegetation management; less year-to-year budget variation; maintenance costs slightly decreasing over time; increased or sustained biodiversity and aesthetic quality of conservancies. Year-long maintenance is required to maintain these restorations.

Process

Park Commission 2/11/2019: Proposal for subset of Proposed 2019 Budget (through May 2019), seeking motion to recommend approval of work to the Town Board —> Town Board

tentative Park Commission 4/15/2019: Proposal for subset of Proposed 2019 Budget (June 2019-Dec 2019), seeking motion to recommend approval of work to the Town Board —> Town Board

Why Manage Middleton’s Conservancies?

Conservancy lands are public lands managed for natural vegetation, habitat and passive recreation. Although conservancy lands vary in size, vegetative communities, landscape features, management priorities, and uses, most conservancies share some or all of the following characteristics:

- ▶ Unique plant communities, wildlife, and geology.
- ▶ Ecological function, such as protecting water quality or preserving wildlife habitat.
- ▶ Maintained as natural area and restored to native plant communities.
- ▶ Provides opportunities for passive recreation, education and volunteering.

The Town’s conservancy areas protect unique features such as glacial moraines, glacial kettles, historic homesteads, and remnant prairies, savannas and woodlands. Protection of Middleton’s conservancy lands preserves the value of these natural areas into the future. The upfront expenses of managing conservancy lands for restored native communities are offset by the values provided by restored land. These values include inherent ecological value, provision of ecological services, water and air quality, climate change mitigation, and increased public interest.

Ongoing and active management of the Town’s Conservancies necessary to protect past investment made to these areas.

<i>Inherent ecological value</i>	Nature has intrinsic value beyond the value that it provides to people. Wisconsin’s endemic native communities demand protection due to their irreplaceability and rarity. Less than 0.01% of Wisconsin’s original (remnant) prairie and oak-dominated communities remain to this day.
<i>Air and water quality</i>	Middleton’s conservancy lands provide air and water filtration. Natural plant communities are superior to human-modified landscapes.
<i>Protection of critical wildlife habitat</i>	Middleton’s conservancy lands protect unique native plant communities and associated wildlife. Conservancy lands support a variety of fauna, including grassland birds and pollinator species.
<i>Climate change mitigation</i>	Biodiversity lends to greater adaptability in response to pressures including climate change and human influence. Native species have superior resilience to conditions of flooding and/or drought.
<i>Passive and active recreation</i>	Conservancy areas provide opportunities for passive recreation, and provide green corridors for the Town’s expanding public trail network.

2019 Town of Middleton Budget Estimate For Natural Areas Management, by Month

Conservancy Month Estimated Cost Activity

Goth Conservancy

Maintenance Development

Month	Estimated Cost	Activity
Jan		
Feb	\$800	Consulting, monitoring and project management (\$200); woody invasive control (\$600)
March	\$700	Consulting, monitoring and project management (\$200); woody invasive control (\$500)
Apr	\$1,100	Prescribed burn in prairies and woodlands (\$935), followed by interseeding (\$165)
May	\$750	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control (\$600 m, \$1500 d), host public program (\$150)
Total	\$3,350	\$1,500
Jun	\$1,250	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control, host public program
Jul	\$450	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control, host public program
Aug	\$300	Consulting, monitoring and project management
Sep	\$1,250	Developing interpretive sign/media and conducting public programs; consulting and project management
Oct	\$1,600	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control
Nov	\$500	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control
Dec	\$300	Consulting, monitoring, and project management
Total	\$12,350	\$4,500

Settlers Prairie Park

Jan			
Feb			
Mar	\$200		Consulting, monitoring and project management (\$200)
Apr			
May	\$600	\$400	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control in north woodland and prairie (garlic mustard, reed canary grass) (\$600 m, \$400 d)
Total	\$800	\$400	
Jun	\$1,120	\$300	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control in north woodland and prairie; Consulting, monitoring and project management; mowing of new prairie area. Host public program.
Jul	\$700	\$300	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control in north woodland and prairie; Consulting, monitoring and project management; mowing of new prairie area. Host public program.
Aug	\$200	\$200	Conducting public programs/volunteer opportunity; consulting and project management

Sep	\$200	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control in north woodland and prairies. Consulting, monitoring and project management
Oct	\$180	Consulting, monitoring and project management
Nov		
Dec	\$600	Woody invasive species control in north woodland
Total	\$4,600	\$1,600

Noll Valley Conservancy

Jan		
Feb		
Mar	\$300	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control (\$205); consulting and monitoring (\$95)
Apr	\$1,200	Prescribed burn in prairies and woodlands (\$980), followed by interseeding (\$220)
May	\$500	Herbaceous invasive species control (\$390); consulting and monitoring (\$110)
Total	\$2,000	
Jun	\$500	Herbaceous invasive species control; consulting and monitoring. Host public program/volunteer session
Jul	\$500	Herbaceous invasive species control; consulting and monitoring. Host public program/volunteer session
Aug	\$400	Herbaceous invasive species control; consulting and monitoring; seed collecting
Sep	\$100	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control; consulting and monitoring; seed collecting
Oct	\$100	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control; consulting, monitoring
Nov	\$300	
Dec		
Total	\$5,900	\$0

Cherrywood Forest

Jan		
Feb	\$700	Woody invasive species control in woodland areas (\$700)
Mar		
Apr	\$700	Prescribed burn of woodland and savanna areas (\$700)
May	\$690	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control (\$375); consulting, monitoring, and project management (\$150). Following prescribed burn, seeding used seed donated by Dane County Parks (\$165).
Total	\$2,090	
Jun	\$1,250	Herbaceous and woody invasive species control; consulting, monitoring, and project management. Garlic mustard and Canada thistle management. Host public program/volunteer session.

Jul	\$950	Herbaceous invasive species control (mowing); consulting, monitoring, and project management. Host public program/volunteer session
Aug		
Sep		
Oct	\$830	Fall treatment of herbaceous weeds (garlic mustard)
Nov	\$180	Consulting, monitoring and project management
Dec		
Total	\$7,390	\$0

Pope Farm Conservancy

Jan		
Feb	\$400	Woody invasive species control in the Ravine (\$290); consulting, monitoring and project management including meeting with Town staff and the FOPFC (\$110)
Mar	\$400	Woody invasive species control in the Ravine, N Prairie, S Prairie (\$290); Consulting, monitoring and project management including meeting with Town staff and the FOPFC (\$110)
Apr	\$2,900	Prescribed burns of North and South Prairies (\$1395 ea.), monitoring and project management including meeting with Town staff and the FOPFC (\$110)
May	\$200	Consulting, monitoring and project management including meeting with Town staff and the FOPFC (\$110).
Total	\$3,900	
Jun	\$3,300	Herbaceous invasive species control in all units; consulting, monitoring and project management including meeting with Town staff and the FOPFC. Host public program/volunteer session
Jul	\$2,200	Herbaceous invasive species control in all units; consulting, monitoring and project management including meeting with Town staff and the FOPFC. Host public program/volunteer session
Aug	\$1,450	Herbaceous invasive species control in all units; consulting, monitoring and project management including meeting with Town staff and the FOPFC. Host public program/volunteer session
Sep	\$600	Consulting, monitoring and project management including meeting with Town staff and the FOPFC
Oct	\$1,200	Woody invasive species control in the Ravine and prairie areas; consulting, monitoring and project management including meeting with Town staff and the FOPFC
Nov	\$200	Consulting, monitoring and project management including meeting with Town staff and the FOPFC
Dec	\$200	Consulting, monitoring and project management including meeting with Town staff and the FOPFC
Total	\$16,950	\$0