



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT



DATE: February 22, 2011
TO: Community Council Members
FROM: Scott Stringer, Municipal Forester
SUBJECT: Valley of the Moon Forest Management Project

Project Background

The Valley of the Moon Park project is a result of a partnership between the Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department (PRD) and the Anchorage Responsible Beverage Retailers Association Inc. (ARBRA). The project was instigated due to a major issue with homeless camps in the forest at Valley of the Moon in 2010 and required extensive clean up efforts. The target area is north of Chester Creek to 16th Avenue and between C Street and E St (see map). However, there is a much greater need to remove the highly invasive *Prunus padus* (European Bird Cherry Tree or Mayday Tree).

The Alaska Natural Heritage Program has completed an Invasive Plant Inventory and Bird Cherry Control Trial. This study was conducted by Botanists and Plant Ecologists in two phases; Phase I recorded non-native plants along four Anchorage trail systems and Phase II was a study of *Prunus padus* or the which documents the distribution, demography, and reproduction biology along the Chester and Campbell Creek Trails. The studies were funded by a grant via the USFS, State and Private Forestry to help improve natural habitats, biodiversity and riparian resource preservation.

The Alaska Natural Heritage Program Invasive Ranking System for Non-Native Plants of Alaska has rated *Prunus padus* a score of 74 out of 100 (higher score = more invasive), which is considered “**highly invasive**” (see publication for more details). The tree has been historically planted in Anchorage which started approximately 25-30 years ago, according to increment borer samples, due to its spring flowers, ability to survive extreme environmental conditions, lack of moose browsing and attractant for birds to landscapes. Unfortunately, it has the ability to form dense monocultures along the creek corridors displacing and out competing native understory trees and shrubs.

Scope

The goals of this project are to increase sight visibility into the forest to help the Anchorage Police Department see illegal activities and to dissuade people from camping in the forest, as well as reduce the seed source and potential for a greater abundance of *Prunus padus* within the forest and along the Chester Creek corridor. Volunteers will hand pull or weed wrench the residual seedlings. ARBRA and volunteers will work to help with the cutting, pulling and stacking of limbs. MOA Parks staff and Community Works Service will cut and chip the larger diameter trees. Chipping will be done back into the forest at a depth no greater than five inches and not in areas that are designated wetlands. No work will be conducted within the Stream Protection Zone.

Work Schedule

The work will be scheduled in spring, dependent on snow and access.

Future Needs

This project will act as a model project for treating the *Prunus padus* within our forests. We will continue to monitor and treat sprouting.

If you would like to review the Invasive Plant Inventory and Bird Cherry Control Study or other guiding documents for our program, it can be found at:

<http://www.muni.org/Departments/parks/Pages/MunicipalForestryGuidingDocuments.aspx>

If you are interested in learning more about invasive weeds, please review:

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/cnipm/>

The success of our parks mission (Health Parks, Healthy People) requires a cooperative partnership approach to managing our parks for the protection of natural resources and enjoyment by the citizens and guests to our city. Cooperative efforts include: volunteer clean-ups, grants supporting research by University Students, restoration projects for stream-bank stabilization and restoration, Salmon in the City type groups and pilot projects to determine future management strategies for the Municipality combating invasive species in Anchorage. This project is also consistent with the goals of the Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan.

If you are interested in becoming involved with or have questions about this project please contact me at (907) 343-4716 or email me at: **stringerst@muni.org**.

Thank you for your interest and support in helping Anchorage Parks and Recreation work toward the goal of reducing and eliminating invasive plants and improving safety in our city.