



PLANNING
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January 13, 2017

PP16035-01

Mr. Tom Tully
Canal Shores Golf Course
1030 Central St.
Evanston, Illinois 60201

RE: Tree/Shrub Trimming Activity
Opinion of No Adverse Impact

Dear Mr. Tully:

We understand the golf course staff proposes to conduct trimming activity of trees and shrubs at several locations around the golf course and have requested our opinion regarding their potential for adverse ecological impacts. One activity is to remove invasive shrubs and trim the lower branches of numerous trees in order to improve visibility of a historical limestone block wall composed of limestone blocks located near the southeast corner of the property. Another proposed activity involves the removal of invasive shrub species, along the eastern edge of the Hole 15 fairway, that are encroaching into the fairway. The other proposed activities are the continued trimming of shrubs at various locations along canal banks that have historically been used as canal crossings for Holes 9 and 16. It is our opinion that none of the activities, as proposed, would result in adverse ecological impacts. A brief summary of each project is described below with an explanation of our opinion.

Tree/Shrub Trimming Along Limestone Wall: A historical limestone block wall is located on the south end of the golf course along the right-of-way of the railroad tracks and ComEd lines. Approximately five trees and numerous shrubs are located near the base of the wall, on the golf course property. The shrubs consist of Common Buckthorn, which is an invasive species that spreads aggressively and degrades habitat. The removal of these shrubs would provide an ecological benefit by removing potential seed sources and reducing the spread of the species. After the buckthorn has been cut, we strongly recommend the immediate application of appropriate herbicide (e.g. glyphosate, or triclopyr) to the outer edge of the cut stump to prevent the re-sprouts that typically form on untreated stumps. The trees along the wall include species such as Norway Maple and Box Elder. These are resilient tree species that would not be harmed by trimming activity on the lower portions of the tree. It should also be noted that Box Elder trees are floodplain species that are presumed to be native to Illinois but tend to behave like a weed and aggressively invade areas. Although the Box Elder trees may contribute limited ecosystem services such as rainfall interception, soil stabilization and perching habitat, these species are typically removed during restoration projects. Unless the Box Elders are functioning in a healthy floodplain habitat they are usually considered weeds. Therefore it is our opinion that removal of invasive buckthorn would be beneficial and that the trimming of lower branches would not have a negative effect on the trees or habitat. If the Box Elders are to be removed, we recommend treating the outside edges of the cut stumps to prevent re-sprouts and immediately stabilizing any bare ground by installing an appropriate seed mix and erosion control blanket.

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Continued Trimming of Shrubs in Fairways over Canal at Holes 9 and 16: Shrubs in the hole crossings of the canal have been continuously trimmed for many years. The shrubs consist of aggressive species, including invasive species such as Buckthorn and Honeysuckle. Continued trimming of the shrubs would not result in an adverse ecological impact. Our biggest concern, in the short-term, is maintaining some vegetative cover on the slopes to prevent erosion. Given the long history of maintenance activity in the area the trimming of the shrubs should not result in the complete removal of vegetative cover. In the unlikely event that trimming activity did result in exposed soils, the exposed area would need to be immediately stabilized and revegetated using appropriate plants and erosion control fabric. The Ecological Master Plan that is being prepared will address long-term management activity for such areas and will focus on the establishment of native vegetation that enhances habitat quality and reduces intensity of management activity.

Buckthorn/Honeysuckle removal in Hole 15 Fairway: Invasive shrubs, predominantly Buckthorn and Honeysuckle, have encroached into the fairway of Hole 15 and are interfering with play of the hole. Therefore, golf course staff proposes to remove the invasive species, east to the top of the canal's slope, and replant the area with turfgrass. We understand that the extent of the clearing activity is not intended to go beyond the top of slope. As previously noted, the removal of buckthorn, in conjunction with herbicide application to the cut stumps, would be ecologically beneficial. To prevent erosion the treated area should be stabilized immediately with the installation of the desired grass seed and installation of erosion control blanket. If the shrub removal is limited to invasive species and un-vegetated areas are stabilized immediately by installing an appropriate seed mix and erosion control blanket, it is our opinion that the activity would not have a negative ecological impact.

We hope this information is useful and satisfies your concerns.

Sincerely,

Scott Kuykendall
Senior Ecologist
Planning Resources Inc.

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