

He
who
plants
a tree
plants
a hope

- Lucy Larcom

Frankfort,
Michigan



Second
Edition



September
2012

TREE
BOARD

Bonnie Warren
President

Appointment Pending
Vice President

Judy Macey
Secretary

Dick Haan
City Council Liaison

Josh Mills
City Superintendent



Tank Hill Progress

Paul Gerhart

The Tank Hill Management Project began nearly a year ago, when a large proportion of trees in this fifteen acre City park were found to have fallen victim to the emerald ash borer (EAB).

The devastating effects of this foreign invader had been evident throughout the greater Midwest since 2001. On Tank Hill, many of the largest ash trees in the forest were standing dead. These dead trees presented a great hazard for people entering the park and the Tree Board knew that something needed to be done.

In August of 2011, a survey was conducted to measure the forest density and identify species of vegetation throughout the forest. The goal of the study was to develop a plan for reducing the number of dead trees while also addressing other issues impacting the sustainability of the forest ecosystem.

The findings showed that, in addition to the obvious effects of EAB, the forest was threatened by many other ecological deficiencies. The reproduction and regeneration of tree species was declining. One cause was the dense

infestation of invasive garlic mustard that prevented new seedlings from naturally establishing. In addition, the few seedlings that did establish were subject to browsing from an over-population of white-tailed deer. There were threats to large trees growing among ash in the overstory. Approximately twenty percent of the overstory was composed of American beech, which is vulnerable to the developing infestation of another pathogen - beech bark disease (BBD). Also, if the large ash of the overstory were removed, the process of doing so would damage other trees both during removal and after, as many newly freed trees are exposed to greater wind and potential toppling.

In recognizing these critical factors, the Tree Board began to develop a management plan to outline activities that could achieve feasible resolve. A timber harvest was planned to remove ash as well as other large overgrown trees that would be vulnerable to wind. Where possible American beech would be removed to reduce the amount needed to be salvaged as BBD develops. After removing these

meeting Announcement

Are you interested in the future of one of the least utilized parks in the city of Frankfort? Are you interested in providing your input for a conservation plan for that park? If so, please join the Benzie Conservation District and the Frankfort Tree Board in a community discussion about the future of Tank Hill in Frankfort.

A community forum will be held Saturday, September 22, 2012 on Tank Hill for the purpose of collecting any and all ideas for the protection, preservation, and best utilization of the park. The forum will be held from 10 a.m. to noon, with a tree planting session to follow at 1pm. Tell your friends and neighbors or anyone who has an interest in this beautiful piece of land in the heart of Frankfort. Light refreshments will be served. Contact the District, 882-4391, or Bonnie Warren, FTB President, 352-9245 for further info.

NOTE: Inclement weather site: the all-purpose room at the Frankfort Elementary School.

Tank Hill Progress

Continued from First Page

trees and selling the timber, several canopy gaps would be created in which to invest the timber revenue towards planting new trees. These gaps would be necessary in order to facilitate the reproduction of species which were found to inhabit the overstory, but would not be able to reproduce under heavy shade. These trees include red oak, black cherry, American basswood and paper birch.

The public's assistance and approval of the plan was crucial to its success. In November, 2011, the public was invited to an open meeting to review the plan and participate in the process that would ultimately determine how the forest would be used. At the meeting, the plan received sweeping approval. Following public approval, the Frankfort City Council voted to formally approve the Tank Hill Forest Management Plan. (This document is online at www.frankfortmich.com - click on the "recreation" tab.) A committee of Frankfort citizens was then formed to participate in meeting the objectives of the plan.

Since that time, much has been accomplished. In the winter of 2012, the forest was harvested to salvage timber. Wood chips, created from slash and debris, were used to help restore the integrity of the forest. Garlic mustard was pulled by an army of volunteers working within a one acre area of the greatest infestation. Additionally, the forest is open to the public for the removal of dead and downed debris for firewood. Anyone interested in taking firewood is encouraged to visit City Hall to sign a liability waiver and receive instruction before cutting.

During the next few years, there will be many opportunities for volunteers to become involved with tree planting, building deer exclosures around newly planted trees and removing garlic mustard. If you would like to become a volunteer sign up at City Hall, or email tank-hill-planners@mtu.edu and you will receive announcements of upcoming Tank Hill events.

This forest has much to offer our community: better air quality; cleaner water; a place for wildlife; beauty to define our landscape. It is also poised to face many changes from the effects of a dynamic global ecosystem as well as human activity. The long term goal of the Tree Board is to address these changes as they come and make human activity conducive to forest growth.


A Grant for the Future

Bonnie Warren

In April 2012, The City of Frankfort, with help from the Tree Board, applied for and was awarded an MDNR grant that targeted damage done by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). This grant (\$18,176) enabled the City to proceed with the removal of 31 dead or infected Ash trees in Bellows, Market Square and Tank Hill parks. The 20% match required by the grantor (\$3,636) will be met by hundreds of donated volunteer hours of labor as described in Judy Macey's article. In addition to removal of trees, the grant covers treatment of infected trees and replacement of trees which have been removed. Work has proceeded all summer long to meet the conditions of the grant. Most recently, three large Ash trees were removed from Market Square Park, harshly altering a treasured and familiar landscape. There was no choice. The trees were so damaged by EAB that they presented a clear hazard to park users, and were beyond responding to chemical treatment. The loss is unexpected and deeply affecting. Our perception of the space is different – something is missing, something is wrong. This grant allows us to replace those trees and reshape the space that is Market Square Park so that it becomes in the future what it has always been: a beautiful, cared for park that we created.

Going to the woods is going home

- John Muir

Tree Board Meetings
are held on 
the 3rd tuesday 
of every month
at 1pm in city hall 

LIFE AS A TREE BOARD VOLUNTEER

Judy Macey

At first, when Peggy Hawley asked me to participate, I didn't really know anything about the Tree Board or their activities, but I knew I liked trees, who doesn't. Within the first year of working with Peggy, Mary Armstrong and Bonnie Warren, I found their passion for the City of Frankfort, its history, beautiful setting, wonderful people, and their vision for enhancing its streets and parks to be infecting. I began to look more carefully at the trees shading the streets and parks and seeing what they imagined could be done for all of the streets.

Working with the Tree Board means being alive to the beginning of all the seasons with meeting the needs of newly planted trees by fertilizing, pruning, and watering. It means meeting wonderful people who share their stories while weeding and pruning in the new city nursery, or pulling garlic mustard on Tank Hill, or pruning city trees in the fall with Kevin Sayers of the DNR who has a home in Frankfort. Many conversations occur over coffee with volunteers that also have that "tree glimmer" in their eyes like Bob Dittrich and Dan Remahl. Jim Grabowski, landscaper, arborist, and philosopher provides new visions for an avenue of trees in Market Square, or a "cathedral" grove of Linden on Tank Hill while we are in the midst of a different project. We will plant these

new treescapes knowing full well that we will not be around to see them at their maturity, but this lends an excitement and promise for our grandchildren's future.

How fortunate we are to be surrounded by the expertise of Paul Gerhart, a young forester who calls Frankfort home, and the many folks of the Conservation District, Tad Peacock, Mike Jones and Jillian Fejszes. Josh Mills and the City Council represented by Dick Haan, receive the many new projects with enthusiasm and support. Mike Viilo provides his knowledge gained first-hand from walking the paths of forests around the world, and each year a new Frankfort artist creates a Tree City poster to help support our activities.

We will continue with projects like Arbor Day Activities at the elementary school that involve many volunteers, and the weeding and mulching in spring with student and adult volunteers, and expand our activities to the nursery and Tank Hill, Market Square and Bellows Parks. For all of you whose hearts beat a little faster in the shade of a landmark tree or walking the path of a wonderful forest, please consider joining us and becoming a part of the visions of tree canopies for all of Frankfort's streets and magnificent tree oases in our parks.

Mul chers



Dick Brown, Max Putney and Roy Rommell, part of a team of volunteers who mulch each young city tree every spring.

trimmers



Mike Viilo and Jim Grabowski prune trees along city streets. - Fall of 2011



Lakeside shakespeare

**Amy Daniels, Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre
Director of Community Development**

At first glance, the task readying Tank Hill for Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre's 9th season looked impossible. However, with the direction of Artistic Director Elizabeth Laidlaw; the vision of LST's Production Manager, Pete Dully; material and labor donated by Jim Cooley of Cooley Contracting; electrical repairs by David Moehle of ETM Electric, Inc.; landscape guidance from Jim Grabowski; support from Josh Mills and the City of Frankfort; and a tireless band of volunteers, the stage was not only ready, it was better than ever.

Tank Hill is a special place and while it was sad to lose so many trees, LST gained an opportunity for growth and change. With amazing team effort natural steps were built into the hill and the stage was moved and expanded, which created better views for everyone in the audience --the hill became the stage. During one performance of Hamlet a family of deer walked across the ridge behind the stage, as if extras in the play.

The company practiced Hamlet and Much Ado About Nothing for six weeks in Chicago before arriving in Frankfort to rehearse on the new stage. The actors loved Tank Hill's transformation. "The new space provides a setting that suits what it is we do," Actor/Director Christy Arington explained, "offering these plays in an outdoor setting, having the beauty and natural backdrop of the space we perform in only heightens the experience, both for the audience and the actors."

When a torrential storm left the space swamped, the LST team sprang into action. With a phone call, Josh Mills brought over a pump and

the entire company, voluntarily, joined to clear the water with a bucket brigade. Then the actors turned over their buckets for rakes and spread 10 yards of mulch (donated by Crystal Gardens). That evening theatregoers enjoyed Much Ado About Nothing on dry ground.

Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre was welcomed back by locals and travellers from as far away San Francisco, the U.K, and Sao Paulo, Brazil. Families plan their summer vacation so that their children can attend LST workshops. "The fact that professional actors take their time and talent to teach the kids make the workshops outstanding," explained Juliet Steitzer of Wisconsin. "We have a huge arts community at home, but there is nothing like Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre." This summer, LST began a partnership with the Oliver Art Center to provide workshops throughout the year and a fundraising event Memorial Day Weekend.

After the final performance, Elizabeth Laidlaw took the stage to offer thanks, a final farewell, and invited the community to join in cleaning up, putting away the stage, and celebrating the close of another successful season. Christy Arington clearly got to the heart of the experience: "we love coming there for the beauty of the space and for doing outdoor theatre because there's nothing like it. But ultimately, it's the people and the community we serve that brings us back every year. The communal experience truly is magical." Lakeside Shakespeare celebrates their 10th anniversary in 2013. For more information visit www.lakesideshakespeare.org or find LST on Facebook.



Before May 20, 2012 with Pete Dully, Joel Buzzell, and Daniels Moehle Family

Photo Credit: Amy Daniels Moehle



After July 25, 2012 Preview Night of Much Ado About Nothing

Photo Credit: Pete Dully

One touch of
nature makes the
whole world kin
- William Shakespeare

Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre Children's
Workshop 2012 with Danny Taylor, Christy
Arington, and Sara Gorsky



Trail building 101 Tucker Ryckman and Mike Viilo

Several issues will need to be resolved as we proceed to create recreational venues within Tank Hill, but trail infrastructure can be designed for use by walkers and bikers. Placement of trails as Tank Hill entry points will lessen the need for parking space and traffic, particularly around the hospital. Access from the elementary school can make the woods available for the kids as well as foot traffic from the south end of Leelanau Avenue, in addition to the Fourth Street access point that exists now. The design features for this 15 acre public facility will have to take into consideration the existing city road and facilities, but can be constructed with community volunteers with a little guidance and training.

A trail's worst enemy is water. Poorly located, designed and constructed trails will inevitably be at the mercy of water and gravity. This combination, if trails are not properly constructed, will result in severe erosion that will consequently require time and money to remedy. Two critical tips to keep in mind are to avoid the "fall line" and avoid flat areas. Water will always find the path of least resistance down a slope, which is why trails constructed in a direct fashion up or down a hill often become severely eroded because they provide water with a road map. Flat areas can become problematic because water will find them and settle in puddles in the middle of the trail, forcing hikers to seek an alternative route and cause further erosion. However, erosion can be easily avoided when trails are properly constructed and volunteers are properly trained. Training does not take much time and the tools are relatively easy to handle.

The construction of a sustainable trail requires more effort than just clearing loose organic debris but less than using a backhoe to alter the landscape. Depending on the slope of the terrain and the density of the forest's flora, steady progress can be made using two simple tools: the McLeod and the Rouge Hoe. A Rouge Hoe resembles a conventional hoe,



Tree City Float for the 2012
City of Frankfort Fourth of July Parade

often sharpened, it is the tool that creates the "bench cut" trails that are etched into a hillside. A McLeod appears much like a cross between a rake and a baking sheet and is often used to clean (rake and smooth) and finish (tamp) the Rouge Hoe's work and is far easier to handle. As far as how quickly a trail can be completed depends on how many people work on the construction. For example, if five individuals who were comfortable with the tools, worked for a full day, the fruits of their labor would result in at least a hundred yards of finished trail.

Tank Hill : A Woodsman's Perspective

**Jim Grabowski, Landscaper
and Consultant to the Tree Board**

It has been less than 2 years since I first became acquainted with the forest of Tank Hill. I wandered up there when the Tree Board asked me to look over the area for a project. I came back to the next month's meeting more than excited. What I found was a jewel in the crown of Frankfort. What it has are maybe some of the biggest oaks and maples around and some fine hemlocks and cherries, as well as many nooks and crannies of woodland wonders. The woods however have suffered from the ash bore assault, numerous blow downs compounded by an aging tree population in decline. Since then there has been a growing interest in the future of Tank Hill and its regrowth and renewed purpose.

When I was a youth I would often wander over to the "Nature Center", a set aside woods and meadows in the Detroit suburbs, to be among some great old oaks that dated back perhaps to before Chief Pontiac. I applaud the foresight that held in trust that forest so that I can still visit some of these same very trees 40 years later. I can still hike off the trails and rediscover a remembered rock pile and maples that still bear the marks of our ladder way up to our youthful lookout in the treetops.

I am grateful that this place from my childhood still remains. Some of our best memories are often of our times among the trees. I think Tank Hill can be one of these places that we can return to and follow the same trail and stand among the same trees in the ever changing forest and feel connected.



Tree city annual poster

Local artist Ellie Harold displays the 2012 Tree City Poster. This collectible series features a different artist each year. Posters are available for \$15 at The Bookstore, Frankfort City Hall, Frankfort/Elberta Chamber of Commerce and State of the Art Framing in Beulah. Proceeds fund Tree City programs.

In the woods
we return
to reason
and faith

- **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

What You Can Do

Consider a donation to the City of Frankfort Tree Fund for the City Nursery, for Main Street tree pavers, for the Tank Hill project or to fund a gift or memorial tree.

Become a volunteer and help with trimming, mulching, watering and special projects.

We can't do it without YOU!!

_____ My contribution is \$_____ to help with _____

_____ I want to become a volunteer

Name _____

Address _____

Phone / Email _____

Please return this form to the Frankfort City Hall. Your contribution is tax deductible.