

WHAT'S NEXT FOR GUILD PARK?



As one enters Ocean Park on Temple Avenue, it's hard not to miss the changes to Guild Park since last fall. The tree canopy is now much more open, allowing sunlight to reach the forest floor and a new generation of trees to emerge. This is all part of a forestry management plan funded by a Project Canopy Grant that was approved by the Maine Forestry Service. The primary goal of the tree thinning this winter was to reduce the local and long distance spread of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, an insect that left to its own devices would eventually kill nearly 1,000 trees in the park. Another noticeable change in the park is the number of branches strewn across the forest floor. Except for the established trails, the broken limbs from fallen trees were intentionally left on the ground as protection for emerging seedlings and to provide nutrients to the soil as they decompose. According to the Maine State Entomologist, severed Hemlock branches at this time of year don't pose a threat to the forest, because Woolly Adelgid insects die off when they can no longer feed on a tree's sap.

To promote a healthy mix of vegetation, a group of volunteers helped to plant roughly 500 tree seedlings in early May that includes Red & White Cedar, Norway & White Spruce, Larch, Douglas Fir, Shagbark Hickory, Allegheny & Juneberry Serviceberry, and High Bush Blueberry. Each seedling is marked with a small flag so that we can monitor their progress over time. This will help to inform any future seedling planting. By the end of May there will be several other steps taken to improve the park, such as the release of additional beetles to feed on Woolly Adelgid that wintered over, the re-installation of the Guild Park sign at the park entrance across from Manor Street, and the roping off of an open area off Temple Avenue as a future site for ground cover and/or native plants. In addition, there will be ongoing work on clearing and fully restoring the trails in the park. Maximizing the long-term health and resilience of the Guild Park forest will require ongoing management over many years including planting of tree seedlings, beetle releases, and other adaptive strategies.

What can you do to help preserve the Guild Park?

1. Learn more about the park by attending a free program on the evening of July 2. The program, organized by the Environmental & Natural Resources Committee, will feature a naturalist led stroll through the park followed by a presentation at Jordan Hall with time for Q & A.
2. **Whenever you visit the park be sure to stay on the marked trails, carry out anything that you carry in, and keep your dogs on a leash.**