



May 14, 2015

Mr. Frank Stec
Village of Orland Park
14700 Ravinia Avenue
Orland Park, IL 60462

Re: Native Establishment
Village Hall North and South Pond
Orland Park, IL

Dear Mr. Stec,

V3 has been in the process of establishing native vegetation on the slopes of the Village Hall ponds and we are providing this assessment of that progress along with some options for consideration. During any native establishment project, we recommend revisiting the project goals and approach to ensure that the proper maintenance plan is in place based on the actual conditions experienced on site.

The initial goals of this project were to remove the previously existing vegetation and reestablish with native vegetation for the purpose of slope stabilization through the deep root native material, water quality improvement and habitat enhancement. The ponds are generally progressing as expected although they are experiencing a significant amount of invasive weed pressure. Our current project approach is to aggressively manage these weeds with herbicide applications and to also install enrichment seeding to supplement the species that are present.

In re-evaluating the goals of the project, additional aesthetic considerations should be evaluated. The enclosed summary provides some options for discussion.

We will be in contact with you to discuss this project approach and verify the project goals.

Sincerely,
V3 Companies

Brad Millis
Project Manager/Field Operations

George Milner
Senior Ecologist

Enclosure: Project Status Summary



PROJECT STATUS

Orland Park Village Hall – North and South Ponds

Village Hall South Pond demonstrates developed areas that are relatively well established with false sunflower and purple coneflower. There are other showy forbs such as butterfly weed, yellow coneflower and Canadian milk vetch establishing but not in great numbers. Heavy weed pressure from teasel, thistle, reed canary grass, Hungarian brome, quack grass and sweet clover have choked out areas of the slopes and need native species reintroduced in order to fill these voids.

The current course of action will include herbicide application to control invasive weeds scheduled to occur on a 2-3 week rotation. In addition, any considerable accumulation of biomass cut will be removed off site to alleviate the unsightliness of the cut weeds. Year-end mowing will be conducted so that the tall, dead stems from plants are removed and do not present a negative aesthetic in the early spring. V3 will also assist the grounds maintenance people in identifying the mowing limits around the pond to avoid any uncut turf grasses at the edges of the prairie.



Photo 1: Southeast pond embankment

As outlined in the management contract for 2015-2017, this approach addresses the above mentioned issues by intensively controlling weed pressure via mechanical, chemical means and conducting a prescribed burn, followed by a seeding in the spring of 2016. This is the most cost effective strategy but yields slower establishment of flowering forb species. In three years the expectations of the site are to achieve a native density and diversity consistent with the most improved areas of the pond (Photo 1) over approximately 80% of the pond slopes. The remaining 20% of the slopes would require further introduction of native species and continued maintenance. Due to the challenging slope conditions (i.e., steep, heavy weed pressure, poor soils) the expectations of high forb density and diversity of color will not likely be achieved through seeding alone.



PROJECT STATUS

Alternate Approach:

This alternate approach addresses the project goal of seeing more color diversity over a shorter time frame. The schedule would be intensive weed control followed by a diverse prairie and wetland plug mix to be installed in May or early June of 2015. In the existing forb areas the plugs are proposed at a rate of 500 plugs/acre in order to create increased color diversity. In areas currently devoid of desirable native species the plugs would be planted at a higher rate of 2,500 plugs/acre to achieve the desired density. The species of plugs would include a variety of forbs that flower at varying times throughout the growing season and would directly address the aesthetic goals of the project while still providing benefit to the other established goals. In order to support and promote the plug growth, a temporary irrigation system would be installed throughout the pond slopes and operated 2-3 days per week or as weather dictates. This is anticipated to be in place through 2015 (or the first year of planting) and then be removed.

By 2016 the Village could expect a marked improvement in the uniformity, density, and diversity of color on the pond slopes, and would continue to improve through 2017.



Photo 2: Example of desired uniformity, density and diversity

A prescribed burn would be delayed until the plug species are fully established. Performing this burn would be coordinated with Village staff to ensure timeliness and take into account any Village events. The burn would be followed by installation of the native seed as described above in order to help the native species compete against weedy species.

Cost of Alternate Approach: \$25,000

This alternate approach can also be enhanced by increasing the rate of planting which would lead to leading to greater aesthetic impact on a shorter timeframe. The additional cost of enhancements is commensurate with the density of plantings.