



Annual Report for 2018

The Friends of Washington Grove, Inc.'s many volunteers, working in partnership with the City of Rochester, had a very good year restoring the Grove. The following is a summary of our collective accomplishments for 2018.

Volunteer Activities

Volunteer efforts focused on continued removal of invasive plants, planting native trees and herbaceous plants, spreading wood chips on trails and trail narrowing. We thank all who gave time and resources to make our work in 2018 so successful.

Volunteers removed invasive plants during seven work parties; particular attention was given to removing Honeysuckle shrubs in early spring and small Norway maple seedlings adjacent to the Monroe County Water Authority road. Volunteers also took out winter creeper, winged euonymus, myrtle, English ivy, Lily of the valley and Swallowwort. In addition to community members, participants in the invasive removal work included students from the University of Rochester on Wilson Day, and the Webster United Church of Christ and Winton Rd. Unitarian Church youth groups. In November fraternity and sorority members from the U of R, RIT and Nazareth College spread wood chips, contributed by Birchcrest Tree & Landscape, on selected trails. As in previous years the Friends participated in the City's Clean Sweep and in the United Way Day of Caring, when Bausch & Lomb employees worked with us.

We devoted four work days to planting native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants, planting nine trees in the spring, and 18 shrubs in the fall. These were financed through the City Reforest Rochester Fund. We contributed to the fund, which had been drained the previous year; the city forester ordered the plants and delivered them to us. In addition, we planted 52 herbaceous plants in the spring which we purchased ourselves. A master Gardener donated two native shrubs and five herbaceous plants which we planted in the fall.

As many as eight deer at once have been seen in the Grove. Although the shrubs and herbaceous plants selected by the Friends are from a deer resistant plant list, deer graze on the oak saplings and for the first time this year rubbed the bark off of several of those saplings. We erected protective wire fencing around the new tree saplings, a procedure we will continue in the future.

Work continues on narrowing the trails along the north ridge of the Grove. We anticipate closing two trails that have been recommended for closure in the Trail Management Plan to diminish erosion and improve the experience of Grove users.

A total of 182 people participated in the work parties for a total of 432 hours.

In addition to these volunteer efforts, the Friends conducted three educational tours in conjunction with the *City Thursday History Nature Walks* program: a spring bird watching tour

and two summer tours. In October 35 students and 7 teachers from the 5th grade of the Rochester Children's School, formerly School # 1, were given a tour. We anticipate ongoing learning opportunities for students from this school.

Grove Signage & Nunda Blvd. Entrance Restoration Projects

The Friends, in cooperation with the city, have developed two major projects for the Grove. A signage project will replace the many signs at the entrances and within the Grove with a new sign system. Ann McCracken, a Cobbs Hill neighbor and owner of A Good Sign Co, volunteered her services for their design. Second, the historic 1930's boulder entrance to the Grove and the timber stairs immediately inside of the Grove have severely deteriorated. A new plan will restore the wall, replace the timber stairs with recycled medina stone curbing as stairs and pave the area between the end of the asphalt paving and the stone wall with recycled medina paving stones. We anticipate that the signs will be funded by the City of Rochester and The Friends will raise funds for the entrance restoration, which we hope will be completed in time of the 100th anniversary of Nunda houses and the neighborhood's Christmas Eve celebration.

Community Meetings

The Friends held their first open community meeting on January 23rd at Lake Riley Lodge. Sue Steele, a local landscape architect, spoke on the health benefits that come from experiencing natural environments. A second community meeting, held on September 26th, introduced and obtained comments on the proposed Grove signage and Nunda Blvd. entrance reconstruction projects.

100 Trees for 100 Years

As a part of the 100-year celebration of the Grove, in 2012 the Friends and the City initiated a fund-raising project, *100 Trees for 100 Years*, seeking contributions to the City's *Reforest Rochester* fund to provide for purchasing native trees and shrubs. The fund is advantageous to the Friends because it comes with the services of the City Forester who competitively bids and delivers plants to us. *Reforest* funds financed the planting of trees in the spring. Tax deductible contributions made to the *Reforest Rochester* fund can be earmarked for Grove planting.

Monroe County Water Authority

Thousands of invasive Norway Maple Seedlings germinated along the west edge of the Grove this year. The source of the seedlings are mature Norway maple trees to the west of the Grove. The Friends marked, and the Water Authority removed, six Norway Maples along the Authority roadway.

Protecting Cobbs Hill Park

We have spent time and energy addressing two threats to the integrity of Cobbs Hill Park, of which Washington Grove is a part. Along with surrounding neighborhood associations and a number of Highland Heights residents, we continue to oppose a plan to build a home five feet from the Washington Grove boundary. We have also collaborated with seven other Rochester organizations opposing demolition of the one-story Cobbs Hill Village homes for seniors with very low incomes, for multi-story apartments for middle-income residents. The project was approved, despite widespread community opposition, by the Rochester Planning Commission and City Council. The coalition has initiated two Article 78 proceedings: the first alleging that the City of Rochester did not follow proper procedures in approving the project; the second

alleging that the owner of the property, Rochester Management Inc, violated deed restrictions and that approval of the project by the City Council required a 3/4 majority vote.

Web Site

The Friends web site www.friendsofwashingtongrove.org continues to be popular

Financial Report

Income

Contributions \$2,436.01

Total Income \$2,436.01

Expenses

Administration \$180.72

Plant Materials and Equipment \$471.54

Volunteer Support \$69.49

Total Expenses \$721.75

Balance on Hand

12-31-2018 \$7,835.09

Plans for 2019

The Friends' Board will soon begin a work plan for 2019 which we will submit to the City in early March for discussion and mutual approval. We appreciate any ideas that you may have for the Grove's improvement. Either directly contact one of our Board members or send us an email at the address below.

Thank you to all who contributed to our success this past year, whether through volunteer hours or donations. We look forward to another rewarding year of progress restoring the Grove and hope to see you in the spring.

Submitted by the Trustees of the Friends of Washington Grove:

Charles Burroughs

Cindy Cahill

Peter Debes

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Jim & Mary Olinger

Jack Schroeder

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