

Wildfire Mitigation in Section 36 Fall 2006

Since 2001, the Anchorage Fire Department and the MOA Parks & Recreation Department have been mitigating the risk and hazard of fire in Section 36. These 640 acres of Municipal land have been heavily affected by the spruce bark beetle. Additionally, the large stands of black spruce within this area create a significant fire hazard to the residents in surrounding neighborhoods. In an effort to provide safe egress for residents during a forest fire and to help limit the spread of a fire into the surrounding neighborhood, the forest treatment project will carefully remove fuels and limb trees.

Improving forest health in this park may be accomplished by pruning the live, residual trees to stave off a future bark beetle attack. Removing the large fuels from the forest will allow more light to encourage regeneration of spruce and birch seedlings.

1 There are two parts to this project. Part 1 along Clark's Road will be done with small mechanized equipment. This upland site is composed of white spruce and birch trees. The surface vegetation is primarily Calamagrostis spp. grass and alder. The crew will be hand falling dead trees only along both sides of Clark's Road within Section 36 (between Hosken Road and the junction of Newell and King's Way). The width of the project will include 150 feet on both sides of the road. A small excavator will pile the limbs and move large wood to the roadside for local firewood gathering. Logs will be cut into short lengths for easy handling and removal by residents. Another machine will mow, or mulch, the remaining limbs into the top layer of the soil. Some slash burning will likely accompany this work. Burn operations are conducted with water on site, each pile is completely extinguished at the end of each day. Exposed areas will be planted with native grasses (Arctared red fescue and Alpine bluegrass) that are shorter than Calamagrostis and greens up quicker in spring, thereby reducing the volatility of the area to fire. Planting with native species also limits the spread of invasive plants.

2 Part 2 of this project is a continuation of completing the shaded fuel break along the west line of Section 36 from the southwest corner north to Clark's Road. The crew will be hand falling dead trees and thinning some live trees to increase the spacing between groups of trees. Tree limbs will be burned on site by professional firefighters. Each burn pile is plumbed to a charged water source. Smoke will be present. Each burn pile is fully extinguished at the end of each day. Burn piles will be seeded with native grass to limit the spread of invasive plants and to re-vegetate the site.

Are you Firewise?

- **Prune spruce trees in fall – wood lots open through September 2nd.**
- **Burn permits available on-line at <http://afd.muni.org>**
- **Firewise information at www.muni.org/fire**
- **Wildfire programming on Municipal Cable Channel 10**
- **More at www.afdfireinfo.com**

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