



Anchorage Fire Department • Wildfire Mitigation Office

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Hanshew – Springhill Schools & Ruth Arcand Park 2006 Wildfire Mitigation Project

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To mitigate the risk and hazard of wildfire in the neighborhood, the Anchorage Fire Department has partnered with the Anchorage School District and the MOA Parks & Recreation Department. This project will treat the forested perimeter of the two schools to reduce the volume of combustible forest fuels surrounding the sites. Thinning the trees adjacent to the school will reduce the exposure of the sites to fire. It will also reduce the potential for fire starts in these areas. This project is expected to begin in October 2006.



Wildfire Mitigation
Springhill Elementary and Hanshew Middle Schools
Fall 2006

Springhill Elementary and Hanshew Middle Schools share Section 16 with Ruth Arcand Park and the many equestrian trails therein. The dense growing black spruce forests surrounding the schools extend through the park and east toward many subdivisions. While some of these trees have succumbed to the spruce bark beetle, the sheer density of the black spruce forest contributes to the risk and hazard of wildfire. In an effort to keep a forest fire from spreading into the surrounding neighborhoods and to support the growth and vigor of live trees, the forest treatment project will carefully remove fuels along the perimeter of the school grounds.

Dead trees will be removed, both standing and downed. Black spruce trees will be thinned into naturally occurring clumps with approximately 15 feet of space between each clump of trees. This treatment will separate "fuels" and reduce the spread of fire in the area. The woody material that is cut from the site will be mulched in the woods. Two small machines will be working this site to move material and mulch the thinned trees. The open areas in the forest floor will be seeded with native grass to limit the spread of invasive plants and to re-vegetate the site.

The accompanying map delineates the areas to be treated. Unit 1 includes shared property between the Anchorage School District and MOA Parks & Recreation. This entire area will be thinned. This section has mostly white spruce trees and birch trees. The healthy spruce trees will be retained and pruned (lower branches removed). Dead trees will be treated in this area.

Unit 2 consists of mostly dense growing black spruce. The treatment of the perimeter of the school grounds will be 150 feet wide. The trees will be thinned into clumps of spruce that have naturally grown together. Live trees will be thinned between these clumps to reduce fire spread. The treatment will occur on the only the perimeter of the school grounds and will not extend into the wetland areas.

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