

June 7, 2011

From: Matthew Miller, PhD, PSS

To: SASYNA Council Meeting, June 9, 2011

Re: Western Hudson Park Reduced Mow Area Proposal to City Parks

Note: This proposal does NOT include the management of the Effigy Mound DA-10. That will be presented as a separate item to the SASY Council at a later date.

**Big-Picture Problem:**

Soil is eroding around western Hudson Park effigy mound. When the soil erodes around effigy mound, soil ON the effigy mound is at greater risk of being eroded. The soil erosion around the mound can be decreased by reducing mowing of selected areas.

**Specific Problems & Solutions:**

Problem 1: Some areas of western Hudson Park have soils that are sloping. When the soils are wet or moist, the tractors used by City Parks lose traction and create bare soil where their tires skid. This bare spot is compacted and susceptible to soil erosion. Compacted soil has less infiltration so water will run overland toward the lake and pick up soil particle and debris.

Solution 1: Mow steeper areas less often. Mow steeper areas only when dry. Instruct mowers to avoid mowing after rain when wet and in the morning when there is dew. Consider mowing less often in the steep areas.

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Problem 2: Western Hudson Park has many trees in the mow area. Because of the irregular shape of the park, the City Parks mowers go round and round the trees, creating rings of compaction and rings of bare soil around the trees.

Solution 2. Have City Parks tell the mower operators to alter mowing pattern so that trees are not circled. Put additional wood chips around trees to discourage mowing to close. Change mowing areas so that no-mow line is further north.

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Problem 3: City Parks mower operators mow over the wood chips that have been spread around trees, on path, around obstacles (such as signs). The chips are then spread onto the grass, not where they are intended to be.

Solution 3. Instruct City Parks mower operators to not mow over chips. Decrease mow area so that the line between mow and no-mow is more obvious to mower operators.

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See Attachments:

- Figure A: Shows western Hudson Park with tree numbers and cultural features.
- Figure B: Shows area proposed for the Reduced Mow option (hachured area).

Proposal:

- That the area subjected to the regular mowing schedule by City Parks be reduced in western Hudson Park as seen in Figure B. Hachured area will be a combination of reduced mowing, chipped trails, and no-mow area.
- That City Parks refrain from mowing areas with a woodchip cover over the soil.

The advantages of reduced mowing are:

1. Reduced soil compaction
  - a. More infiltration of rain through soil (larger macropores)
  - b. More oxygen in the root zone for improved vegetation growth
2. Reduces bare soil caused by mowers, less soil erosion
3. Removes steep area from constant mowing
  - a. Steep areas of silty soil are slippery when wet
4. Avoids circle mowing around trees
5. Increased tree growth and better tree health
6. Reduced mowing costs
  - a. Less hours
  - b. Less fuel, exhaust, and maintenance

The disadvantages of reduced mowing are:

1. Requires improved communication between the person on the mower and the neighborhood representative.
2. May require neighborhood to assume responsibility for making sure the reduced mowed areas are mowed in a timely fashion (by City Parks, Neighborhood, or contracted mowing).
3. May require the neighborhood to actually mow the area. If the grass gets too tall, Parks regular mowers will not be able to mow it.
4. Reduced mowing may create "hay" or grass that is left onsite and will not get raked by Parks staff.
5. Taller grass could instigate complaints from other park users.

SEE next page for suggested letter of support:

# SASY

## Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara Neighborhood Association

9 June 2011

To: Mr. Kevin Briske, Park Superintendent, City of Madison Parks  
Ms. Marsha Rummel, District 6 Alder, Madison Common Council

The SASY Neighborhood Association Council heard a presentation by Dr. Matthew Miller regarding his long-standing concerns of soil erosion caused by mowing at western Hudson Park. Dr. Miller, representing the western Hudson Park group, has been working with Craig Klinke, Supervisor of East Parks, to reduce mowing impacts on the soils around the mound. The SASY Council greatly appreciates the working relationship between City Parks and our neighborhood.

The SASY Council has reviewed the information presented by Dr. Miller and support efforts to find a workable solution with City Parks to soil erosion concerns. We realize that the options put forward by Dr. Miller are the starting point of the discussion and will likely be altered as a plan is developed and implemented.

Respectfully,

Lou Host-Jablonski, Chair  
SASY Neighborhood Association Council

cc: Dr. Matthew Miller representing the Western Hudson Park Group