

# *Friends of the Scarsdale Parks, Inc.*

*P.O. Box 53  
Scarsdale, New York 10583*

December 12, 2016

Via Email

Brian Gray, Superintendent  
Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation  
Village of Scarsdale  
1001 Post Road  
Scarsdale, NY 10583

Dear Brian,

In response to your request for an estimate of how many trees FOSP has curated in the parks this year, which according to our understanding of the question asked by Arbor Day could mean trees that were both planted and/or maintained, we provide the following information.

A total of 150 new trees were planted by FOSP in 2016, and at least another 142 that we previously planted (in 2015) and maintained in 2016 makes a subtotal of 292 trees curated by FOSP in the public parks this year. The 292 figure doesn't include approximately another 60 existing mature canopy trees which we maintained in 2016 by removing invasive vines and watering. Easily 352 trees is the total curated by FOSP in Village parks during 2016. The following is a breakdown of this inventory.

## **150 NYSDEC Sourced and Other New Trees Planted and Maintained by FOSP in 2016**

In 2016, 125 bareroot tree seedlings were obtained by FOSP from the Saratoga Nursery under the state Trees for Tribes grant we obtained for the benefit of the Village (in 2014), as follows:

- 25 Poplar Hybrid
- 25 Red Maple
- 25 Sugar Maple
- 25 Red Oak
- 25 Toringo Crabapple

These 125 trees were planted at Harwood Park by FOSP and the community volunteers under FOSP's supervision during the second annual Community Planting Day on May 14, 2016. They are enveloped by tree shelter cylinders that were installed during planting in order to promote survival and healthy growth, to access weeds for removal, and to protect the roots, bark and leaves from small animals and deer that have been observed visiting the wetland.

Early this spring FOSP also planted along the west bank of the S. Fox Meadow Brook approximately 25, 1-year willow stakes (young branches sourced from the meadow grove just south of Library Pond), which are expected to grow into small trees by summer 2017 and to help stabilize the stream bank. All newly planted trees in 2016 are also maintained by FOSP. The 2016 total is 150 new trees planted and maintained by FOSP.

**100 NYSDEC Sourced Trees & 42 Donated or Rooted Trees Maintained by FOSP in 2016**

FOSP's maintenance of hundreds of both newly planted and previously planted trees includes watering when necessary and removing weeds. The latter is done painstakingly by hand, but in the case of emergent Japanese Knotweed weeding is done mostly by cutting in order to protect tender tree seedlings and saplings from being literally smothered by fast growing, larger invasive plants. This individualized approach also requires removing and replacing the protective tree shelter cylinders and re-staking trees to promote stability.

As part of our Harwood Park conservation work utilizing the above NYSDEC recommended procedures, FOSP has maintained the following 142 trees which were planted in 2015:

**100 NYSDEC Sourced Trees Maintained by FOSP in 2016** (planted in 2015, some delivered as containerized saplings):

10	Red Maple
25	Speckled Alder
10	Serviceberry
15	River Birch
5	Red Cedar
10	Black Gum
25	Red Oak

**42 Trees Total: 12 Trees Donated by FOSP and 30 Rooted by FOSP** (planted in 2015, 12 containerized large tree saplings and 30 Willow stakes):

3	Red Oak
3	Red Cedar
3	Black Gum
3	Red Maple
30	Willow stakes (approximate number, sourced from Harwood Park meadow)

The 100 trees that were planted at the May 7, 2015 inaugural Community Planting Day, combined with the 42 additional trees planted in 2015 by FOSP in early spring (30 willow stakes) and fall (12 containerized large tree saplings), most of which survived and we continue to maintain, should be counted as part of the Arbor Day inventory total of 352 trees for 2016.

**60 Existing and New Tree Canopy Maintenance Inventory in 2016**

**Maintenance of Additional Trees in 2016:**

This year and last year FOSP painstakingly cut invasive vines and/or removed vines from dozens of existing mature canopy and other trees at Harwood Park and elsewhere, including on the east side of the Harwood Park brook. Mr. Hochvert personally, and with the help of our board members, has conducted much of this work and extensive power equipment weed whacking to

weaken and eliminate invasive plants such as Japanese Knotweed according to environmental best management practices, without the use of carcinogenic chemicals.<sup>1</sup> FOSP has also performed watering of trees at Harwood Park and at Hyatt Field Park (of recently planted trees). We conservatively estimate FOSP curated in this category another 60 trees that should also be counted as part of the inventory total of 352 trees for 2016.

**Smaller Native Shrubs-Potential Understory Trees (NYSDEC grant):**

Although we don't include these plants in the above total, of the 150 native shrubs that were planted at Harwood Park in 2016 (and 185 in 2015), most have survived and are maintained by FOSP. Some species have the potential to reach the size of small understory trees, which would be the desired outcome to introduce species diversity to the wetland.

**FOSP Conservation Work in the Public Parks in 2016 - Top 20 List**

Aside from FOSP's annual tree inventory assessment, this time of year we also report to the PRC and the Village about FOSP's conservation and related environmental work to benefit Scarsdale Village public parks and green spaces. Our all-volunteer Board of Directors and volunteers under our supervision engaged in the following activities this year (a partial listing):

1. Recommendations and funding for Chase Park irrigation project
2. Harwood Park Restoration Project, May 14, 2016 Community Planting Day
3. Hand watering plants and trees in Harwood Park and Hyatt Field Park
4. Invasive plant mitigation and weeding (without herbicides) through by-hand removal and motorized weed whacking in various parks
5. Maintaining the Library Pond and meadow, Chase Park and Hyatt Field Park gardens, among others;
6. Vine cutting at Harwood Park, the Harcourt Woods and elsewhere to prevent or arrest tree mortality
7. Spring planting over a dozen native bare root shrubs from Saratoga Nursery at Hyatt Field Park and Chase Park (FOSP donation)
8. Spring and/or fall fertilizing at Chase and de Lima Parks
9. Site surveys of parks and plantings with Village Staff, including the South Fox Meadow Brook restoration from Olmsted Road to Church Lane

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<sup>1</sup> A prior Village grant program initiated at Harwood Park, using herbicides to abate invasive plants over a 3-year period, was unsuccessful. FOSP instead employs environmental best management practices to remove and weaken invasive plants with the goal of eradicating them permanently over time.

10. Park restoration and maintenance planning
11. Providing recommendations to Village Staff on environmental best management practices
12. Hyatt Field Park surveys, tree recommendations, wildflower/butterfly garden planning, native plant selection, raised frame construction, debris removal, and maintenance including intensive watering and invasive plant weeding regimen
13. Research and written reports relating to the parks, including tree recommendations, tree canopy conservation, pollinator plant species, wetland restoration, public safety issues, educational signage, and refuse/recycling containers
14. Continuation of the Heritage Tree Project at Hyatt Field Park, designation of the Tulip Tree grove (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), 4<sup>th</sup> annual event
15. Fund raising to benefit Scarsdale's public parks and green spaces
16. Educational videography of FOSP events and conservation work in the parks for SPTV
17. Culling and/or removal of garbage, construction material and other refuse found in various parks, including debris from extensive prior dumping in Harwood Park
18. Recommendations and supervisory work, including obtaining 2 days of pro bono "ball & burlap" services from Bartlett Tree Experts, on project in which the Village transplanted mature, specimen evergreen Bird's Nest Spruce (estimated 2-ton) and Oakleaf Hydrangea from Autenreith Road traffic island to de Lima Park
19. Assisted with repair of vandalized comfort station at Hyatt Field Park
20. Conducted a tour of Harwood Park for Bronx River Parkway Reserve Conservancy board members (networking by the DEC regional coordinator), who then volunteered to plant numerous tree seedlings during the 2016 Harwood Park Community Planting Day.

Much of this work was done on site in the parks.

### **FOSP 2016 Project Time**

The above top-20 categories and the following items describe the work that FOSP devoted to Scarsdale's public parks and green spaces in 2016, but not the amount of considerable time expended. Previously the PRC has requested a report on our estimate of FOSP volunteer time. FOSP reported spending over approximately 1,000 hours in 2015. In 2016 we estimate that we spent a greater amount of time, easily over approximately 2,000 hours based on the considerable additional time FOSP has actually spent on the top-20 and the following:

- Continued work in 2016 at Harwood Park on the collaborative FOSP, Village and NYSDEC Trees for Tribes wetland restoration project grant, correspondence with the

DEC, planning and implementation of a third annual planting day event in 2017, and selection of Saratoga Nursery plants offered by the DEC for the 2017 Community Planting Day

- Written recommendations regarding proposed Library renovation project landscape and construction options relating to the potential impact on the Harwood Park canopy trees, woodlands, and stream buffer trees and understory plants
- Written recommendations opposing the proposed construction of parking at Hyatt Field Park, and reviewing FOSP's historical opposition to turning public parks and green space, such as Chase and de Lima Parks, into parking venues
- Contribution of funds, environmental best management practices recommendations, and volunteers on planting and watering days in support of the Secor Meadow and Woodland Restoration Project
- Survey of Chase Park irrigation project Phase 1-2 with PRC Foreman for the purpose of adjusting timing and coverage
- Pruning low hanging tree branches (and shrubs) at Chase Park and other parks and green spaces.

### **FOSP 2016 Gifts to Scarsdale Village**

In 2016 FOSP donated in the aggregate approximately \$6,500 to the Village for park infrastructure improvement, plants and plant supplements, tools, supplies, and hoses, and agreed to allocate the balance of prior donations (\$2,788 previously donated by FOSP for de Lima Park improvements) as follows:

\$3,500	Chase Park Irrigation Project, Phases 1-2
\$1,500	Hyatt Field Park Pollinator Project – raised frames
\$ 231	Hyatt Field Park plants
\$ 237	Village Hall entry-plaza plants
\$ 250	Secor Meadow and Woodland Restoration Project plants
\$ 785	Tools, supplies, tree stakes, hoses, etc.

Miscellaneous amounts not listed were also expended for fertilizer for Chase & de Lima evergreens, compost soil for Hyatt Field Park pollinator garden, etc.

As we mentioned previously in our report to the PRC, in 2015 FOSP donations were approximately \$2,575 in plants, equipment and other materials used exclusively in the parks (which did not include the eventual contribution to the irrigation project at Chase Park). We also allocated an additional \$2,541 for our project to enhance the azalea collection at Chase Park (in honor of our late board member and civic leader Eda Newhouse), which we plan to implement in spring 2017.

We would be pleased to provide any additional information you require about this report.

Brian Gray, Superintendent  
December 12, 2016  
Page 6

On behalf of our Board of Directors, we would like to thank you and the PRC Staff, Foreman John Carmody, Mr. Salanitro and the DPW Staff, Mr. Pappalardo, Mr. Cole, Mayor Jon Mark, our Trustee liaison Deborah Pekarek, and the entire Village Board and Staff for your generous support, unwavering assistance, and for giving us the opportunity to continue our mission of conservation, restoration and preservation of Scarsdale's public parks and green spaces.

Best wishes for the New Year,

Madelaine Eppenstein and Dan Hochvert  
On behalf of the Friends of the Scarsdale Parks, Inc.

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CC: Mayor Jon Mark, Scarsdale Board of Trustees, and Village Staff (listed on email distribution)