

Tab 7: Lake Holiday Forest Management

Issue:

A member of the community, John Sorna, has experience with forest management. He has a forestry educator friend who he would like to invite to Lake Holiday to assess the health of the forest land in common areas.

Background:

Lake Holiday has substantial forest area in its common areas. Over the years trees have fallen or grown too close together along with other issues that would potentially threaten the health of our forest, according to John Sorna. ***See attached letter from Mike Wolf***

Recommendation:

Without a full evaluation from an experienced forester, it's hard to determine if any action should be considered. John Sorna has suggested possibly removing the dead trees and harvesting others (logging). It may be beneficial to inquire about the health of our forest area through a forest professional.

Summery:

A member of our community has suggested the Board look at a program to manage our woodland. John suggests it is likely to involve the logging industry to harvest trees both dead and alive. This would require logging trucks be given access to our property, probable minor road development and access points.

Motion

1. To allow John Sorna and our GM to investigate a logging operation in our forest area through a professional forester.
2. The Board is not interested in a logging operation or further research in this area at this time.

Re: Forest Management in Lake Holiday

John,

As we discussed, your new community, Lake Holiday, has a substantial amount of forest land. While most community members likely enjoy living in or near a forest environment, most folks aren't fully aware of just how much forests enrich our lives. For years, while working for Penn State as a Forestry Educator, I put a lot of effort into engaging students about the importance of forests - on a large scale...oxygen production, utilizing CO₂, cleaning air, cooling the environment, sequestering carbon, purifying water, and much more; but also on a smaller scale its hard to imagine our world or our lives without forests and the products derived from them and how we rely on products from forests on a daily basis to improve our quality of life.

In short, forests are super-important! And, therefore, care for our forests is equally as important. I am a forest health advocate - meaning, I want to sustain forests and all the great benefits they provide. When I work for a forest owner, I first seek to understand why they own their forest and their ownership/stewardship goals. With their goals in mind, I analyze their forest resource and then present options and provide advice that will both improve their forest's health and get them closer to meeting their goals.

Good forest management does not always include action. Sometimes, based on landowner goals and forest analysis, the best plan is to do nothing. In other cases, planned strategies can be implemented to improve forest health and sustainability. For instance, I always ask a landowner to look down...at the forest floor. Most landowners talk about their trees, but rarely think about what is on the forest floor and basically what is in place (at the ground level) to replace their larger trees. Some landowners plan to harvest - what will grow back? Some landowners are losing trees to disease or insect - what will grow back? Some landowners lose trees to storms - what will grow back? Its actually a simple question to answer...the only things that will grow when trees are cut or die are the plants that are already present on the forest floor at the time of the impact. So, essentially, look at your forest floor - do you have an abundance of miniature trees of the correct species? If so, great. If not, ask why and get active to solve the issues - this is forest management and this is key to sustaining and/or improving a healthy forest. When most landowners honestly assess their forest floor (where all health and sustainability must start), they quickly realize they do not have a miniature forest that is set to replace their large trees should some event (harvest, wind, disease, insect, etc) occur. What does your Lake Holiday forest floor look like? Is it open (no seedlings)? Is it full of invasive plants? Is there an abundance of non-tree vegetation like fern or striped maple?

The reality is, if you do not have a healthy forest understory (vegetation on the forest floor), you do not have a healthy forest. However, there are strategies to implement that can solve the problems. If Lake Holiday were interested, I am available for a review of your forest. I would start by understanding your goals and then I would assess your forest's overall health. Together we could develop a strategy to improve your forest's health and sustainability and help Lake Holiday reach their goals.

Let me know if you would like more information.

Mike

For: Richard Traczyk

From John Sorna