

**Prairie Club Environmental Stewardship Task Force
Long Range Land Management Plan – Hazelhurst Camp
November 1, 2013**

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Purpose of Long Range Land Management Plan

In keeping with the Prairie Club mission statement, Hazelhurst Camp offers Club members and their guests an array of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and nature. The naturalistic character of the land, perhaps even more than camp's structures, makes Hazelhurst unique. The land, therefore, with its many distinct habitats, is one of the Prairie Club's most valuable assets, and should be protected and nurtured for future generations.

The Prairie Club is moving towards developing long range funding plans for Hazelhurst's buildings; so, too, must we provide for our land.

Mission, Scope and Methodology of PCES Task Force

The Prairie Club Environmental Stewardship (PCES) Task Force was established by the Prairie Club Board in June, 2011. Reporting to the Board, the task force was charged to develop a long range land management plan for Hazelhurst Camp and Spring Grove. In consultation with the camp's committee chairs, the PCES will produce a long range plan that will guide the investment, stewardship, maintenance, conservation, preservation, education and usage of all Hazelhurst natural habitats. The plan will be reviewed and approved by the Hazelhurst Operating Committee and the Prairie Club Board.

Traditionally, conservation at Hazelhurst has focused on the camp's plants; emphasizing preservation of native trees and shrubs and removing invasive plants. While this remains a priority, the long range land management plan encompasses all elements of a healthy ecosystem including the interdependencies of various land forms such as the dunes, forest, and water features including Lake Michigan, the pond and creek, and the impact of human activity on same.

Additionally, given the conservation heritage of the Prairie Club, Hazelhurst is truly a historic cultural landscape that tells a story about early conservation efforts. For that reason, we have included significant historic elements of the landscape, whether natural or built.¹

PCES participants include representatives from the entire Prairie Club membership (since the Hazelhurst land belongs to the Prairie Club as a whole) not just Hazelhurst siteholders. Any reference to membership shall mean to be the entire PC members not just HH siteholders.

Specifically, the PCES members are:

Lloyd Anderson:	Prairie Club Board member (former); Hazelhurst siteholder
Sarah Craig:	Prairie Club Board member; Hazelhurst siteholder, Eck Institute for Global Health, University of Notre Dame
Bernie Dahl:	Prairie Club member; Program Chair of landscape architecture, Purdue University
Gerry Donnelly:	Prairie Club Board member (former); Hazelhurst siteholder; CEO, The Morton Arboretum

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Ellen Elrick: Prairie Club Board member (former); Hazelhurst Camp Chair (former); Hazelhurst siteholder
 Sharon Lemler: Hazelhurst Conservation Chair; Hazelhurst siteholder
 Cathy Maloney: Prairie Club Board member (former); Prairie Club Conservation Chair; Hazelhurst siteholder
 Mary White: Prairie Club member, Off-Site Season Pass Holder

The methodology to develop this long range plan is best described in the following chart:

Task Description	2011				2012				2013			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Review existing landscape												
Identify SWOT*												
Review best practices												
Confer with camp committees												
Develop recommendations												
Review & approve plan												

*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

This plan was developed through volunteer effort and, while there is considerable expertise among the task force members, the extent of analysis should not be considered exhaustive. Among the recommendations are areas where the task force feels additional research and analysis might be beneficial.

Overall Goals of Hazelhurst Camp Land Stewardship

Hazelhurst Camp is precious to the Prairie Club. All concerned are interested in protecting and nurturing Hazelhurst land and water resources entrusted in our care. The Prairie Club has a heritage of nature appreciation and conservation, and we want to be good stewards of these resources and ensure that they are sustained for future generations.

Effective stewardship of Hazelhurst land and water resources should include the use of prevailing best practices in conservation and environmental land management within the constraints of the Prairie Club budget and the recognition of the camp as a residential and recreational camp for its members and guests. This represents an evolution from the original conservation practices of the Prairie Club. Whereas our forebears emphasized protection of lands from development (Hazelhurst, and famously, the Indiana Dunes and Cook County Forest Preserves), we need to now extend this definition of stewardship to protect the land from ourselves and from encroachments of external environmental factors.

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In early conservation movements it was sufficient to “rope off” a section of land and consider it saved. Today, we must consistently give nature a hand to help a natural habitat survive.

Specifically, the goals of Hazelhurst land stewardship are to:

- Identify and prioritize land and water features as valuable assets
- Develop and update the definition of the “ideal” Hazelhurst landscape
- Consistently monitor the health of land features against established benchmarks
- Proactively estimate and reserve funds needed to protect the land
- Actively manage the land resources to achieve the “ideal” Hazelhurst landscape

The so-called “ideal” Hazelhurst landscape will be defined through this land management plan, as approved by the Hazelhurst Camp Council and Prairie Club Board. Input from Prairie Club members will be sought.

The planning horizon for this land management plan is five years: from 2012 through 2017.

The “Ideal” Hazelhurst Landscape: Guiding Land Management Principles and Vision

How should the land and water features that comprise Hazelhurst Camp reflect the Prairie Club’s mission to: “encourage the love of nature and participation in outdoor recreation by providing facilities and activities that allow members and guests the opportunity to experience the great outdoors. We foster a sense of community, the appreciation of the beauty of nature, and the importance of environmental conservation.”²

Ideal Vision: The Hazelhurst Camp landscape will reflect, as nearly as possible, the pre-settlement Michigan dunes and forest habitats. Manmade contrivances (i.e. cottages, roads, signage, utilities, etc.) will blend into the landscape and harmonize with its natural features and processes. Where necessary, proactive land management techniques will be used to maintain the health of the forests, dunes and water features.

We believe the following principles should guide decisions about our land and water management:

- The unique naturalistic character of the land and water features at Hazelhurst Camp contributes greatly to the Camp experience. Adequate resources must be dedicated to maintain the natural environment.
- All HH landscapes should favor a natural environment, with a harmonious blend of manmade structures.
- Native plantings are strongly preferred over nonnative flora in all areas of the Camp.

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- Proactive land management techniques will be judiciously applied, using the latest and proven best practices, to facilitate land stewardship.
- Volunteer efforts, an important Prairie Club tradition, will continue as a way to educate members about conservation, and also reduce land management costs. Professional services may be used as the need arises.
- Cooperation with and knowledge of adjoining communities' land and watershed management practices, along with compliance with any governmental regulations will be followed.
- Human health and safety are important in land management considerations. The quality of water in our creek, pond and wetland areas, and the light and air circulation in the forest should be optimized.

Background on Camp Hazelhurst

History of Land Use:

Camp Hazelhurst was purchased by the Prairie Club on February 1, 1930 as a replacement for the Tremont Camp (now the site of the Indiana Dunes State Park). When purchased, the land had been farmed by William R. Hibbs and his successors.

Prior to conversion to farmland, we believe that the 60 acres which comprises Camp Hazelhurst mirrored the natural dunes/woodland that can be seen at Warren Dunes State Park. As such, it contained beach bordered by foredunes and dunes, and successive native forest plants and shrubs culminating in the beech-maple forest characteristic of early southwest Michigan.

Early maps of the Hazelhurst property ca. 1930 indicate a forested area near the beach and open land near Prairie Road and the farmhouse. A whimsical drawing of a cow on the map suggests that there was land open to grazing, and other farmyard pursuits. Additional roads, and later, infrastructure utilities such as water, sewers and electrical lines were added by the Prairie Club for the new cottage sites. The Prairie Club began adding to existing structures left by the Hibbs family, and retained some of the original buildings.



Figure 1 An early view of Buena Vista shows an open grassy area in front of the structure.

Current Camp Rules and Site Lease Language on Land Use

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Since many interpretations of conservation exist among Prairie Club members, it is important to document the existing rules and policies governing land use at Hazelhurst. The PCES identified only Section 7 of the Hazelhurst Camp Rules pertaining to conservation, and a reference to tree removal in the Hazelhurst Building and Grounds rules.³ The siteholder’s lease (Section 12 “Ownership of Vegetation”) speaks only to removal and damage of vegetation on the siteholder’s site.

The existing Camp rules proscribe against tree removal, climbing the ravines and the disposal of vegetative debris. These rules, while descriptive, lack consequences and a monitoring function. They also do not address or offer guidelines as to types of plantings or hardscapes, nor do they address plantings on common grounds.

Site Evaluation and Analysis

Task force members visually inspected the grounds during the summer and fall of 2011. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for each area were documented. The team also evaluated the areas for the following factors:

- Quality of plantings (low number of invasives, healthy plants, not overgrown)
- Accessibility (trails are well-placed and maintained)
- Historical importance to the Prairie Club
- Current usage is appropriate and optimized
- Reflects well on Prairie Club’s mission of environmentalism

Description and Map of Functional Zones

For purposes of analysis, the camp was divided into eight “functional zones,” i.e. areas that correspond to specific activities (See Appendix 1). The zones and their primary functions are:

- 1) Beach: public face of camp, swimming and watercraft
- 2) Grassy dunes: protection of dunes, aesthetics, exploration
- 3) Wooded dunes: Offers shaded walk to beach, wildlife and nature sightseeing
Includes:
 - Sunset Point,
 - Basswood Point
 - Beach paths to lake
- 4) Cottage zone: dominated by human occupation, many introduced and invasive plants. Includes:
 - Buena Vista, parking lot, Family Cottages
 - Blowout, Oak Road Loop
 - Wooded areas between cottages and structures
- 5) Inland waterways: Pond, creek and ravines, steep slopes, erosion threat, walking bridge
- 6) Camp Entrance: First impressions of Camp, recently renovated. Includes:

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- Farmhouse, registry, mailroom and library, Legacy Garden
- Red Barn, Monday Morning coffees, Saturday night programs
- Maintenance area: garbage dumpster, not for public view
- 7) Recreation/Play area: Includes:
 - Junior Clubhouse,
 - Tennis, basketball, playground
 - Open wooded area, former victory garden, council ring, teepees in the woods
- 8) Camp boundaries: The perimeter of the camp abuts other developments on the south and Prairie Road on the east. These areas should receive special attention so that the views, both outward and inward, reflect the Prairie Club spirit.

Historical Features: Intermixed among the functional zones are special historical features which form a rich cultural history for the Prairie Club. We bring special attention to these with the hope that these features will be preserved as part of our land-culture connection.

SWOT Analysis of Key Functional Area

Beach Zone: The Beach Zone is well-monitored by one of our Camp Committees, includes rules governing its use, and is functioning well.

Grassy Dunes Zone: Playing on the dunes is discouraged, however there is no real enforcement.⁴ Generally, the grassy dunes area looks good, although the former path area should be allowed to fill in with grasses.

WOODED DUNES:

The wooded dunes include two points of historical and scenic interest to Hazelhurst Camp: Sunset Point and Basswood Point.

Sunset Point offers an overlook down the wooded dune to Lake Michigan. Recently, nonnative low evergreens were removed in front of the bench seating. However, the whole dune that faces Lake Michigan is overgrown and infested with invasive plants.



Figure 2 The view from Sunset Point is overgrown and filled with invasives. There is barely a glimpse of Lake Michigan.

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Basswood Point is the highest point in Camp Hazelhurst. It is located at the top of the dune on the left as you take the cement path to the beach. Today, the view from Basswood Point is obscured by the woods and does not seem feasible to reclaim.

Beach paths through Woods to beach: These walkways have recently (2010-2012) been the beneficiaries of workdays to remove invasives and restore paths. Currently there are four paths leading to the beach: 1) cement block path, 2) wooden step path, 3) Sandy dune path in front of Sunset Point and 4) newly designated dog path on the north boundary of the dune. The sandy dune path is being reclaimed by nature.

The two beach paths named on maps as “Wagon Trail” (with no steps) and “Beach Path” (with wooden steps) have become more and more overgrown with invasives over a period of decades. Vines and shrubs can literally choke the spaces and make parts of the paths impassable to humans, as well as strangle healthy new growth of trees such as oaks, beech, and other hardwoods.

For many years conservation-minded individuals from the Club worked quietly to clear out overgrowth along the path. In recent years, several all-camp workdays and additional smaller work parties have cleared out invasives and dead timber to open up the paths, allowing more air and light to the forest floor. Exotics removed have mainly been



Oriental bittersweet vines, garlic mustard, black locust, buckthorn, Japanese honeysuckle, and black jetbead. In several areas, natives have been replanted in the vacant spaces. The results reward the effort, in that more native wildflowers and hardwood

Figure 3 Despite extensive volunteer efforts to remove invasives from the Camp's main dune area, invasives continue to choke out other healthy, native plantings.

seedlings have flourished in those areas. However, invasives still proliferate, and will regain the upper hand rapidly if we do not keep working. The areas planted with native ferns in the fall of 2011 and 2012 are thriving, and provide a good example to encourage restoration projects.

COTTAGE ZONE:

The Blowout is an open sandy area in the woods behind cottages at the end of Dune Road and Catalpa Road. It was once a play space where, at least until the 1980s, children from nearby cottages played and enjoyed the natural openness. A natural dunes formation, the Blowout is relatively unknown to current Hazelhurst members.

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Although it can still be described as an open blowout, it is significantly overgrown. Woods are closing in, many small roots are under the surface of the sand, and poison ivy abounds. As a feature of the dunes/ woodland the blowout could provide an experience of a unique dune formation. Without human intervention, it is presently being reclaimed by woodland.

Oak Road Loop: This area of the camp, as an “island” surrounded by roads, offers an opportunity to maintain and showcase a natural woodland landscape. In 2004, a project was begun with the goal of restoring and maintaining a woodland preserve for the appreciation and education of Prairie Club members.



Figure

so

4 The Oak Road Loop is an "island" surrounded by roads which act as barriers to underground encroachment by invasives. As such, it was a good area to create an "invasive-free" zone. It is still subject to seed dispersal of invasives by wind or fauna, must be monitored.

The activities involved in this project, conducted by PC volunteers, included:

- Removal of invasive plants
- Identification and labelling of selected plants
- Planting or encouraging the establishment of native plants
- Ensuring that natural forest processes are allowed to occur (e.g., tree falls, decomposition, etc.)
- Protecting the preserve from development, reductions in size, or other threats and impacts
- Maintaining a walking trail through the preserve to provide access
- Measuring improvements in the composition and structure of the woodland over time
- Providing an opportunity for Prairie Club members to become involved in or learn about an ecological restoration and conservation project on Prairie Club land and learn about native plants and forests

Today, the Oak Loop Road area reflects the ongoing efforts of this initial project, and remains one of the most invasive-free areas in the Cottage Zone. Continued efforts are needed in monitoring this project to ensure its success.



Buena Vista: In discussions with the co-chair of Buena Vista, it was determined that the landscape is relatively good. Like many dwellings at Hazelhurst, it is surrounded by ivy groundcover. However, it is fairly invasive-free. There is a

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noticeable depression in the ground between the “road” side of the facility and the parking area. This continues to persist despite efforts to fill it in.

Figure 5 The landscape surrounding Buena Vista is generally good, however, as with much of the Camp, ivy predominates.

Parking Lot

The parking lot is primarily utilitarian in its function. It provides extra parking for cars and some boat trailers during the summer months. It is also a location for road aggregate used for road upkeep and has served as a staging area to deal with fallen trees from storms. The parking surface is of adequate compaction and drains well. The parking area is well shaded and in “off-season” it is an open space for a pleasant walk-through.

The parking seems to be adequate most of the time, however the logs and gravel limit the *parking* space. The central location of the parking lot makes it ideal to store road aggregate. For better appearance, the



aggregate should be placed in a defined area and camouflaged by plantings or hardscape. Logs from storms should be removed in a timely manner.

The parking entrance is a good size considering the multi-purpose use of the area. Some additional vegetative screening could be placed along Main Road. The informal system of parking, without delineated spaces, allows the area to feel like a wide open space during those seasons when there is little additional parking needed.

Figure 6 The dirt parking lot is fairly unobtrusive. Care should be taken to remove parked trailers in accordance with Camp rules.

The parking lot should be monitored, making sure that boat trailers are removed by Nov. 1 each year, as per the Campsite Rules. Road maintenance materials should be placed advantageously for road repairs with as little disturbance to parking as possible. The parking lot should continue as a pleasant open space meeting the needs of parking, road repair, and occasional staging for storm damage.

Family cottages: With the recent reconstruction of the Family Cottages, unsafe, overgrown trees have been removed as part of the renovation, and some efforts have been made to improve the landscape;

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specifically redirecting water from downspouts. Erosion continues to



Figure 7 Opportunities exist at the Family Cottages to install some screening plantings to soften the front of the structure and prevent erosion on the sides. These should be low and ensure good air circulation around the building, and perhaps incorporate rain gardens or rain harvesting components.

pose issues, however, and high traffic could threaten plantings. There are many opportunities for the Family Cottage landscape: **It could be a showcase on native landscaping for many PC renters & HH siteholders.**



The connecting trail through the woods to the Legacy Garden could provide woods/prairie experience. **We should consider the use of rain barrels, or other water-saving devices to help with erosion near the cottage.**

Figure 8 Proposed plantings in front of Family Cottage can link with the trail to the Farmhouse - making a nice walk through the woods and connecting with the Legacy Garden.

Wooded Areas between Cottages and Structures:

The wooded areas interspersed among cottages and other structures are in various states of health, ranging from very healthy wooded areas, to overgrown impassable thickets, to suburban style “manicured” treatments. Hazelhurst has always had a range of “styles” in the 30 foot radius around a site, including mown grass lawns on Chestnut Rd.



Figure 9 This woodland area on Main Road across from Buena Vista recently suffered from a natural fire. It shows, however, how a natural groundcover of Virginia creeper, and more dappled sunlight comes through the forest when overplanted trees and groundcover ivy is removed.

A variety is fine as long as it does not harm our wooded areas.

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Consideration should be given to updating the lease language to discuss planting guidelines around individual sites to preclude plantings of exotics or invasives.



We have some sections which are so full of invasive vines (English ivy, bittersweet, to name two) that no young trees can grow, and the forest cannot re-generate itself



Acres of our camp are engulfed in English ivy – starting between cottages, but also reaching farther and farther out into the woods, smothering native plants and tree seedlings in its path. When ivy is allowed to climb up and flower and set seed, its spread is uncontained, as birds spread the seed in their droppings. The same is true of areas between cottages which are so full of bittersweet vine that it invades the tree canopy. Areas more than the 30 foot border around a site suffer the worst neglect, and show the most damage to the natural landscape. **These areas should be cleared of invasives.**

Figure 10 The Camp is engulfed in English ivy. It is acknowledged that this is a monumental task to remove. However, where possible (e.g. islands such as Oak Road Loop), and when climbing and choking trees, efforts should be

made to halt the progress of the ivy.

INLAND WATERWAYS & ENVIRONS:

The Pond: The pond is believed to be a manmade feature dating to the early farm days of Camp Hazelhurst. It was created by damming the creek that winds around the camp.

The pond was a thriving habitat for frogs, turtles, muskrats, heron, dragonflies, and other pond wildlife. Children often go to the pond to collect frogs and tadpoles and connect with the natural world. It is a pretty sight in the fall when there is less duckweed and the trees are turning color. As currently configured the overflow creates a waterfall which is fun.



Figure

the
is,
the

Unfortunately, the pond is silting in. The current configuration directs water over the
11 A pond committee has been formed to determine the proper remediation of this habitat.

overflow. The pond is heading toward wetland, and loss of pond habitat in Hazelhurst. To have a pond, silted in as it water must be directed over the dam rather than through overflow pipe. This threatens the integrity of the dam.

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In Fall, 2011, the “plug” was pulled on the pond allowing it to drain and alleviate the threat to the dam. An interest in restoring the pond resulted in the establishment of a Hazelhurst Pond Committee in Spring, 2012, reporting to the Camp Council. As of early 2013, an engineering firm had been retained to evaluate the alternatives for the dam.

The ravine is a deep woodland flood plain with steep banks that lead to the creek with many diverse mature trees and spring woodland wildflowers. It is a lovely walk. The ravine runs through the boundary between Hazelhurst and Birchwood and so any major initiative would require cooperation with the neighbors. There is no path and the most intuitive course for a path would follow the creek wending through both properties.

Rule #7 in the Hazelhurst rules prohibits playing on the ravine. Nonetheless, a path into the ravine would give members access to a different sort of ecosystem, a woodland floodplain. The ravine can be a judiciously used source of wildflowers for transplants. Invasive species, in particular garlic mustard and periwinkle, require continuing maintenance. English ivy from the cottages north of ravine road could engulf the entire ravine turning it into an English ivy desert. We should consider pulling out ivy encroachment into the ravin, removing or inhibiting garlic mustard and periwinkle annually. Explore possibilities for promoting wildflower profusion.

The creek: The creek does not seem to have a name, but meanders through the camp and ultimately runs into Lake Michigan. In 2012, the creek was tested for *e coli* and found to be satisfactory.

CAMP ENTRANCE

In 2012, a project to enhance the camp entrance was completed thanks to generous donations from Prairie Club members. The enhanced entrance will: improve safety for vehicles, including emergency vehicles, as they enter and exit Prairie Road; reduce dust from the road; remove invasive plants along Prairie Road; provide better landscape near Red Barn and the entrance itself.



The **Farmhouse** landscape could be improved with the plantings of more natives, in a low-maintenance design suitable for a high-usage building.

Figure 12 A low maintenance design for the front of the Farmhouse and the "entrance" side of the Library/Registration building would be a fitting statement for the Camp entrance and complement the new landscape.

The **Legacy Garden** is an excellent educational display, and a watering spigot has recently been located near the site to help with watering.

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Figure 13 The Legacy Garden includes representative native plants to inspire Prairie Club members to plant natives at home and at Hazelhurst Camp.



RECREATION/PLAY AREA (stretches from behind Farmhouse to end of Tennis Courts)

The Play Area is a community space for non-beach recreational activities. There is open space for field games, a tennis court and basketball hoop. There's a well-used playground for younger children and clubhouse facilities. Within the last year there has been some culling of trees for more light and to reach the clubhouse as well as several upgrades to the clubhouse.

Regarding flora, there are exotics and invasives in the woody areas and undergrowth in general and around the perimeter. Beyond the tennis court the

area is filled with exotics and invasive bushes. Although additional fencing was added on Lynwood drive, foot access is fairly easy.

Opportunities: Build on current energy evident in upgrading Clubhouse building and opening up the space.

In "cleaning out" trees, bushes and undergrowth, consult with conservation chairman for the most effective process and accurate recognition of the bushes, vines, trees to remove. Make a natural obstacle to foot traffic from Lynwood Drive by limiting the mowing behind the swings and adding non-invasive thorny plants. **Work on areas between tennis court, clubhouse, Lynwood, Chestnut first.**

Threats: Without attention there will be continued deterioration of wooded spaces toward a "jungle" of invasives and the deterioration of the open field to a sand lot. Both areas should be on a "watch" list.

This area is well-used by families. This community asset needs to be developed and maintained in a people friendly way which includes environmental best practices.

In 2008-2009 plans were developed for enhancing the recreation area between the Clubhouse and tennis court with attention to both native plantings, natural areas and improved play equipment for children. At the time, the expense deterred siteholders from approving the project. However, there were workdays to remove invasives in limited areas and two new swing sets and a few picnic tables built by volunteers. Copies of the development designs are available from Prairie Club member and landscape architect, Zoe Elrick for reference.

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In 2011, the Junior Clubhouse Committee raised \$10,000 for renovating the Junior Clubhouse. Several trees were removed from around the perimeter to allow sunlight and fresh air to reach the building. Renovation included structural repairs, new windows, new roof, and interior pressure cleaning to remove mold and mildew. Broad community support for the project confirms the importance of this family recreation area as a treasured part of Hazelhurst Camp.

Council Ring area:

Behind the Farmhouse is a wooded area which includes a cement “Council Ring” that was inspired by the signature landscape design elements by Prairie Club founder, Jens Jensen. Currently, the area is overgrown and plagued by mosquitoes. By clearing the dense undergrowth and invasives, the Council Ring can become a destination for storytelling or quiet contemplation of the forest.



Figure 14 The Council Ring behind the Farmhouse is overlooked, but can be a great asset to the Club. It is a nod to the Club Founder, Jens Jensen, who used these landscape elements in most of his designs. Presently this area is overgrown and thus becomes mosquito-ridden. However, with proper thinning of trees, and removal of invasives, it can become a great destination for family walks and storytelling.

CAMP BOUNDARIES

The camp boundaries are marked with metal posts painted orange which are placed at strategic points. A boundary walk is available to members each year to inform them of the location of the camp boundaries. We should make sure the posts are sufficiently marked with foliage trimmed away. Add signage at specific points such as the end of Chestnut to inform others that this is Hazelhurst and private property. Assess the camp boundaries for maintaining a buffer zone of native plantings such as the end of Catalpa and Dune where the development along Pine Rd (outside HH) is quite different from Hazelhurst. Add native trees, bushes along boundaries while continuing the removal of invasives. Choose selected points along the boundaries such as the corner of Linwood and Prairie Rd to enhance with native plantings. The new entrance (2012) illustrates attention to one of our boundaries.

HISTORICAL FEATURES:

There are many features of the land that are of historical interest, and of consideration for preservation:

Bells: In the early days of the camp, fire bells were used throughout the camp to warn of a fire. These bells were bright red and stood on a white post. Currently, the bells are deteriorated, and beyond repair per Sally Craig. New ones were purchased, and it is under discussion if/how they might be used for alarms (2013).

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South Shore Path: This diagonal path, beginning at Linwood and Prairie Road was taken by business travelers returning from the Chicago Loop to visit their families at HH. It is now overgrown

Victory Gardens: During the war, this garden was located behind the Junior clubhouse, near the basketball area.

Concrete Walk: Once used by an iceman delivering ice to the cottages. Cottages used to be along this path.

Wagon Trail: First developed as a way to get boats down to the beach, then gradually “paved” with cement block which aided the stroller and wagon group. Gradually became the popular “no steps” way to the beach.

Blowout: Finding an open sandy spot in the midst of the woods made the Blowout feel like a special and unique place. It was once a well used place for children to play in the sand without going to the beach. In earlier years there were programs held there.

Orchard: An orchard was located where the current visitor parking lot exists today. A chicken coop existed near one of the cottages.

Mailboxes: Inside the mailroom came from the early Harbert post office.

SUMMARY OF FUNCTIONAL AREAS

Below is a “report card” of each of the functional areas, applying a ranking of “A” to “C” to indicate the team’s overall assessment.

Summary of Functional Areas		
	Score*	Opportunities/ Comments
Beach Zone	A	Good
Grassy Dunes Zone	A	Good – allow former path that extended to the beach to revegetate with grasses
Wooded Dunes Zone		
Basswoods Point	C	Let nature take its course
Sunset Point	B	Need to clear, maybe make benches
Beach Paths	C	Many invasives; subject of many work parties

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Cottage Zone		
Buena Vista	B	Generally good; may need to fill in some spots
Parking Lot	B	Compared to almost any city parking lot, is a beautiful and nicely shaded oasis. Could be better, but lower priority
Family Cottages	B	Could use connecting trail to Legacy Garden; wildflower plantings & erosion control
The Blowout	C	Let nature take its course
Oak Road Loop	A	Good landscape example, put effort into maintaining
Inland Waterways	C	Pond committee formed. Analysis underway. Ravines currently stable; need to be monitored
Camp Entrance	A	Entrance project very successful. Farmhouse plantings could be replaced with low-maintenance natives.
Play/Recreation area	B	Clear invasives. Plant with natives. Consider alternate play usage.

Best Practices/Consulting Services as Could Be Applied to Hazelhurst

We recognize that Camp Hazelhurst has a unique landscape, but there are many opportunities to learn from other organizations or communities who face similar conservation issues. The task force also wanted to explore opportunities to obtain grants or technical assistance from appropriate entities. A limited review was performed on the following. The task force realizes that additional review is necessary.

Michigan DNR offers grants, education and technical assistance. Programs for which we may qualify, and would be useful might include:

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- **Visiting Urban Forester:** For about \$200, a DNR forester will spend a day assessing the status of our forest and determine where it can be improved in the future. http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-30301_30505_40936-108952--,00.html
- **Homeowners Association Green Resources Management Guide:** This guide is on the DNR website.
- **Portable sawmills:** The DNR site lists where portable sawmills can be obtained. This may be useful in that there have been suggestions over the years that the PC and HH could benefit from selling timber if trees need to be removed.

Grants, as listed on their website in 2013, include:

1	Grant Name	Eligibility	Applicability to HH
2	Land and Water Conservation Fund	States and local governments	N/A
3	Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund	Local units of government must provide at least 25% of the project's total costs as local match.	N/A
4	Recreation Passport Grants 5-Year Recreation Plan	Government units only eligible	N/A
	Dam Management Grants	Open to state units of government, non-profit groups and individuals to manage dam removal, repair and major maintenance projects that will enhance aquatic resources and fishing opportunities along with reducing infrastructure costs and improving public safety in Michigan.	Possibility for the pond dam?
	Community Forestry Grants	Municipal and state agencies	
	DTE Energy Foundation Tree Planting Grants	Tree planting projects such as park, right-of-way, city street, nature study areas, school grounds planting and neighborhood revitalization projects. All trees must be planted on public land or land open to the public.	May be applicable to any new plantings on Prairie Road?
	Emerald Ash Borer Prevention, Mitigation, and Restoration Grants	Eligible lands include city parks and stands of upland hardwood with an ash component equal of 10 basal area or greater with commercial harvest potential now or in the next five years. The landowner must indicate willingness to follow a Stewardship Plan prepared for the property.	Although the PC might be eligible for this, per a recent visit from a local forester, we do not have many ash trees in camp.

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	Forest Stewardship - Certified Plan Writing Grants	Cost-share program that helps landowners by providing financial and technical assistance on Michigan's non-industrial private forestlands	There are quite a few programs under this umbrella. Some are not applicable since they require the organization to be a production forest and others require that the land be free of structures. These should be studied further.
	Forest Stewardship - Outreach and Education Grant Program	Local units of government, individuals, nonprofit organizations, and school districts with school forests to encourage private forestland owners to actively manage their forest ecosystems and to develop long-term management plans that will enhance the understanding of forest systems, while at the same time providing outreach and education to all citizens about stewardship of our natural resources.	50% match required. Would require outreach to non-Club members

Tryon Farm

Tryon Farm is a newer conservation community in Michigan City where 120 out of 170 acres are left as different unique ecosystems. Land management is performed by First American Management Company, a property management firm, in Valparaiso, with special projects done jointly by homeowners and professionals. Costs to homeowners approximate \$2000/year for road and land management. As an additional revenue source, Tryon Farm also offers their Barn to select outside groups with kindred goals.

Other Lakefront Associations (e.g. Bethany Beach, Birchwood)

We contacted a member of the Bethany Beach community to learn how they handle invasive plant maintenance. Their community is different from ours in that there is more manicured lawn. They hire a contractor to provide lawn maintenance services. We were not informed of any invasive plant maintenance plan.

Invasive Plant Organizations: Michigan Invasive Plant Councils; Does not seem to be active after 2009 (<http://www.invasiveplantsmi.org>). The Midwest Invasive Plant Network seems more active, and lists a wide variety of grants for invasive plant removal. These should be examined in full. <http://mipn.org/grants.html>

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Chikaming Open Lands easements: There have been discussions among siteholders in the past re the tax benefits of assigning part of the HH camp as an easement to a land trust. Pros and cons of this can be read here: <http://chikamingopenlands.org/getinvolved/protectyourland>

Recommendations

Based on our review of the existing conditions, and our analysis of best practices, we have developed a list of recommendations. These relate, in particular, to the functional areas given a “score” of “B or C” in our summary of Functional Areas above.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

1. Manage Invasive Plant infiltration

Common areas

- Develop a one-page “scorecard” to assess each functional area for invasives & healthy plantings.
- On an annual basis, rate each major area using scorecard and present results to Prairie Club Board, HH Camp Chair and HH Ops Committee. Prioritize and estimate costs for remediation, including volunteer resources and paid resources. **Include a reasonable, but adequate line item budget for annual costs to improve, maintain the HH Camp landscape.**
- Assign accountability for proximate common areas to Club chairs of Farmhouse, Family Cottage, and Buena Vista and include landscape maintenance in their work days and annual budget.

Siteholder areas

- Distribute and maintain in a visible location the list of “preferred plantings”
- Incorporate language into the siteholder lease re use of preferred plantings and removal of invasives in siteholder areas.
- Create a “model” siteholder landscape with willing siteholder and landscape architect consult
- Develop ways to recognize siteholders who use native plants and remove invasives. Publish guidelines and let siteholders nominate their site for recognition/award.
 - Free landscape consult & plan for naturalistic landscape for winner
 - Biannual “Hazelnut Hero” landscape award for self-nominated naturalistic site
 - Plaques/signs for self-nominated siteholders that achieve levels towards “Hazelnut Hero”:
 - Gold: No invasives, native plantings, permeable/no hardscape
 - Silver: Minimal invasives, permeable/no hardscape
 - Bronze: Significant attempt to remove invasives

2. Ongoing assessment of Water quality

- On a periodic basis, conduct water sampling on creek and lake using canine patrol and other techniques and present results to Prairie Club Board and HH Ops Committee. Prioritize and estimate costs for remediation.

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- Identify and remediate possible sources of contamination (e.g. drainpipe on Main Road)

3. Conduct Proactive Replanting

- Publish list of “preferred plantings” for common areas; canopy, understory, and groundcover.
- Create an inventory of major plantings.
- Prepare periodic planting list in conjunction with invasive removal and overall area assessment.
- Estimate costs for above and present for approval for annual budgeted line item for landscape plantings
- Engage services of professional to assess overall tree health

4. Education

- Organize volunteer “Street Captains” to identify exotic or invasive problems along roads and to help arrange “block parties” in conjunction with Camp Conservation Chair to clean up.
- Create sturdy, attractive signs where replantings are in process.
- Engage intern to initiate/support conservation projects.
- Create model showcase spots, “conservation quarters”, Label trees and natives on nature walks

PROJECT LIST FOR NEXT THREE YEARS

Pond remediation (separate engineering study).

Engage intern for summer work

Engage professional forester to assess land quality

Target and estimate cost for prioritized invasive removal and replanting.

Create a long-range land use plan

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¹ The National Park Service provides a good definition of an historic landscape:

Historic landscapes are special places. They are important touchstones of national, regional, and local identity. They foster a sense of community and place. Historic landscapes are also fragile places. They are affected by the forces of nature, and by commercial and residential development, vandalism and neglect. They undergo changes that are often unpredictable and irreversible. For these reasons and for the benefit of future generations, it is important to document these places.

Historic American Landscape Survey, National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/history/hdp/hals/index.htm>

² Prairie Club mission statement, approved June, 2012

7. CONSERVATION (from Hazelhurst Camp Rules)

All removal or trimming of trees shall be with the prior approval of the Conservation Committee or, in case of emergency, of the Camp Chair. A siteholder may plant, trim, maintain or remove at their own expense those trees, shrubs and bushes that are within 30' of their cottage or ½ the distance from a neighbor, whichever is the lesser footage. If the Conservation Committee considers a tree, regardless of where located, to be a hazard to any house or other structure, the Committee may have it removed. The removal of a fallen tree will be handled in the same way, but it is more desirable for the siteholder to have the tree removed.

In an emergency the Conservation Committee will notify the siteholders that there is a tree problem and they will be given 60 days to respond. Either way, the siteholder is ultimately responsible for the expense. Branches and other debris must not be thrown in the ravine. People must not play on the slopes of ravines. The spirit of all restrictions regarding trees, shrubs, other vegetation, the ravine, pond and dunes is aimed at keeping Hazelhurst a safe and beautifully wooded, scenic area. Branches and brush cut by a siteholder are to be placed at marked stations ONLY. The caretaker will arrange for brush pile pick-up. Siteholders are requested to avoid adding brush during the height of the season. Camp chair

will coordinate the brush pick-up with the caretaker no less than three times yearly. Leaves and vines are not allowed in the brush pile.³

There is also a rule concerning tree removal during construction in the Building and Grounds rules:

10. Removal of trees or shrubs necessary for the construction of the building requires approval of the Conservation Committee. The committee should be consulted before removing trees or shrubs on camp sites at any time, and the approval of that committee secured.

⁴ Per an email from siteholder Don Gray, there is a State Act which addresses activities on protected dunes:

“The act in question is **Part 353, Sand Dune Protection and Management, of the Natl. Resources and Envl. Protection Act., 1994 PA 451** as amended. The Act identifies and designates critical dunes that fall under its aegis. Our foredune, known as the Hazelhurst Dune, is one of the dunes so designated.

The sand dune act was amended in 1989 to regulate developmental, silvicultural and recreational activities. I doubt that "playing on the dunes" is a prohibited activity. The act does require, however, a permit for such activities as building construction, contour changes and vegetation removal in areas identified as critical dunes.