



## **SOSA (South of South Avenue)**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **Information about the Green Bay Trail Restoration:**

##### **Who is spearheading the restoration of this next section of the Green Bay Trail?**

The Friends of the Green Bay Trails, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, has raised and committed \$100,000 to restore the Green Bay Trail south of South Avenue to the Glencoe Community Garden north of Harbor Street. For each part of the trail's restoration, the Friends solicit gifts from community residents and businesses, and applies for grants from corporate and environmental foundations as well as from State of Illinois agencies. Beyond that, the Friends has forged collaborations with the Village of Glencoe, Glencoe Park District and the Chicago Botanic Gardens, for additional "in-kind" work and consultation to complete this section of the trail.

##### **What trees will be removed in this section of the trail and why?**

The healthy oak, cottonwood, and elm trees that currently line the trail will remain. But the poison ivy and shrubby buckthorn trees will be removed. Buckthorn—an invasive species not native to the local ecosystem—shades spring ephemerals and has a poisonous root system that prevents native plants from growing and thriving, thus causing erosion. Buckthorn kills the tadpoles that eat mosquito larvae, and its berries are toxic to children and dogs. As an invasive species, buckthorn is not susceptible to pests or disease to check its spread. Further, it hosts a fungus and aphid that attract the Asian lady beetle, which can damage trees native to the ecosystem.

##### **What will replace the buckthorn?**

A variety of trees—Ironweed, Swamp White Oak, and American Hornbeam—and shrubs ranging from Blackhaw Viburnum to Common Witch Hazel will be planted, along with varieties of wildflowers and grasses. The restored area will contain more than 100 native trees and twice as many native shrubs.

The removal and re-planting implement a formal plan designed by a licensed landscape architect in partnership with the Friends of the Green Bay Trail, the Village of Glencoe, the Glencoe Park District, and reviewed by the Chicago Botanic Garden to create a natural habitat and to support good drainage along this section of the Green Bay Trail.

##### **How long will the project take?**

The generous support of the community and our partners means the restoration project can move quickly—completing the transformation of this section of the trail in one year. Phase One, cutting and removal of buckthorn, will be completed in winter of 2018 to minimize compaction and other damage to the soil. In Phase Two, spring and summer of 2018, the area will be prepared for planting. In Phase Three, fall of 2018, trees and shrubs will be planted; native wildflower and grass seed will be spread and covered with a blanket to protect the seeds from birds and help prevent erosion. Then, Mother Nature takes over: it helps to remember the saying, "The first year they sleep, the second year they creep, and the third year they leap." It may take a year or two for you to appreciate the transformation after the 2018 installation. Thank you in advance for your patience and appreciation of a restored trail.

## **Benefits of the Green Bay Trail Restoration:**

### **Why is it important to plant native species of trees, shrubs, and flowers?**

Native species of vegetation support a natural diversity of life ranging from insects, birds, and other wildlife. A native oak tree, for example, supports many species of caterpillars, vital food source for a baby bird that consumes over 100 caterpillars a day. Some 99 per cent of insects contribute to a healthy ecosystem through pest control, as a food source—for example, dragonfly larvae eat mosquitoes—and as pollinators. In fact, insects pollinate 90 percent of all plants, thus providing one of every three bites of food consumed by human beings. Apart from supporting life cycles of insects, native plants help balance the environment: they sequester carbon, manage water by filtering pollutants and slowing storm water and erosion, and thus sustain the natural habitat. Finally, native vegetation adapts more successfully than non-native vegetation to the extreme shifts of weather in the Chicago area.

### **How hard will it be to maintain the Green Bay Trail once it has been restored?**

The Green Bay Trail project is about restoring a natural habitat; it reintroduces a diverse and thriving ecosystem that once was common to the area in which we live. The restoration of this “cycle of life” will create a natural process of renewal over seasons, years, decades that requires less maintenance of manpower, time, and money to sustain. In short, unlike exotic Asian and European plant species that lack nutritional value, native plants, wild non-hived bees, and other insects contribute to an intricate, thriving ecosystem that is self-renewing and supports a healthier environment. The restoration puts “nature” back in the North Shore suburbs for the wellbeing of plants, wildlife, and human beings.

### **Why should it matter that restoration of the Green Bay Trail is tackled?**

The restoration of the Green Bay Trail—the reintroduction of native plants that support diverse insect and bird species—creates cleaner air, a safer pathway for recreation, and the serenity and enjoyment of nature outside our doors. Like Native Americans hundreds, even thousands of years before us, we walk carefully through nature, carrying with us the responsibility to be good stewards of the land and the life it supports. By caring about restoring the Green Bay Trail to native species, we not only sustain a natural ecosystem, but also show our own civic mindedness to our community and our stewardship of nature.

### **Are there concerns about restoring the Green Bay Trail?**

Some residents adjacent to the Trail have expressed concerns about losing the buckthorn privacy screen that shields their private residences. For the one-acre SOSA section that is to be restored, the Friends proactively has contacted nearby residents (on Ida, Mortimer, Old Green Bay, and South streets and avenues) to inform and to elicit comments, concerns, and recommendations. These contacts have involved email and phone calls, flyers, face-to-face meetings, listening small-group gatherings at private residences, public meetings at the Glencoe Park District and at the Village of Glencoe board meetings and have extended over more than a year. Moreover, the Friends have modified some plans for plantings—adding non-native evergreens—to accommodate these residents’ concerns. However, land that is to be restored is owned by the Village of Glencoe and the Glencoe Park District, both of whom are partners and strongly support restoration. Ultimately, they, not the Friends, will make decisions about if and how to go forward with trail restoration. The Friends—and knowledgeable organizations and governmental agencies—believes strongly, however, that removal of toxic and invasive buckthorn is essential and benefits area residents overall by restoring a thriving, natural ecosystem that is healthier, recreational, and safer for adults, children, and pets.

### **How do area residents feel about restoration of the Green Bay Trail?**

Surveys conducted over three years (2014 by the Glencoe Park District and 2017 by Friends of the Green Bay Trail) show overwhelming public support for trail restoration. The Park District survey found that 85 percent of respondents wanted more walking and biking trails, and 71 percent wanted nature trails. The highest priority of what respondents were willing to fund was preservation of open space and natural areas (53 percent).

The Friends survey of over 500 area residents found similar, strong support: the survey drew a robust response of over 25 percent with no objections raised and only positive response to the trail's openness, sunlight and feeling of safety, the wildflowers, and the beauty of the Glencoe portion of the Green Bay Trail in comparison with portions of the trail through adjoining suburbs. In fact, respondents recommended the Friends seek additional partnerships to model good trail restoration and/or to address these sections of the trail in the future. Moreover, the most positive comments centered around the need to remove invasive species—specifically buckthorn—and to create a diverse and healthy environment.

### **Who says buckthorn is damaging and invasive to a healthy plant and insect diversity?**

Many governmental and educational institutions warn of the danger of buckthorn. For example, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Morton Arboretum, Chicago Botanic Garden, and the University of Illinois classify buckthorn as an invasive plant and recommend removal. Moreover, the State of Illinois has passed legislation that classifies buckthorn as exotic and invasive—making it illegal to buy, sell, distribute, or plant buckthorn. With that in mind, the Friends has restored the four-acre section of the Green Bay Trail from Scott Avenue north to Harbor St. and dedicated \$100,000 of funds raised and over 10,000 volunteer hours to remove buckthorn and to restore the ecology. Similarly, the Friends has raised and has in hand an additional \$100,000 to restore a one-acre site referred to as SOSA (south of South Avenue to the Glencoe Community Garden), in partnership with the Village of Glencoe, the Glencoe Park District, and with professional oversight by the Chicago Botanic Garden. The overall \$200,000 commitment by the Friends has been raised from 300 donations from area donors who support environmental restoration of the Trail.

**If you would like to give to this project, to become involved, or wish additional information, contact [info@gbtrail.org](mailto:info@gbtrail.org). Your support is crucial and welcomed.**

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