



NEWS RELEASE

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Trees being replaced during Soo Locks Park project

Detroit — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has begun work on the planting plan portion of the Soo Locks Facility Master Plan. A plan for maintaining the trees and shrubs in the Park is necessary to ensure that this beautiful public asset is preserved for generations to come.

As a part of the plan, removal of trees in the areas of the Center Observation Platform and the fountain has been completed; these trees will be replaced according to the plan. Future tree and shrub replacements will occur at a relatively deliberate pace over the next twenty years, or more, based on their condition. The total number of trees throughout the park will remain the same or may increase as part of the overall plan.

The plan provides a framework to ensure that the trees and shrubs located in the Upper and Lower Canal parks remain a key component of the park atmosphere and visitation experience. The plan addresses three categories; Plant Diversity, Plant Condition/ Health and Vigor, and Use of Plants as a Site Design Component. Tree removal accomplished to this point addresses all three categories.

Plant Diversity

Forty- five different species of trees and shrubs can be found in the park areas with Sugar Maple accounting for 55 percent of those trees. It is important that the diversity of tree species be increased to protect the park against the possibility of species individual diseases and pests.

Plant Condition/Health and vigor

The majority of tree health issues on site are due to overcrowding, lack of regular pruning and absence of mowing mulch rings. This plan recommends that all trees that are dead or in poor condition be removed from the site and that mowing mulch rings be installed around the remaining trees.

Use of Plants as a Site Design Component

The archway that is formed by the Sugar Maples planted along the sidewalk adjacent to the lock will be maintained and supported by the addition of new Maples along this sidewalk where appropriate. In other locations within the Park where diseased, dead, or dying trees must be removed, these trees will be replaced with species that also offer a high canopy effect such as White Oak, Black Maple and Red Maple. Other trees that will be planted include Paper Birch, Lacebark Elm, American Mountain Ash and Green Vase.

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Soo Trees 2-2-2

This plan also re-opens sight lines, like ones provided by the original 1940's plan, for all visitors to the park. The 1940's planting plan utilized tall, deciduous trees that softened the space, and provided shade while allowing views to and from the ships; this will continue. Current conditions indicate that additional trees were added after the 1940's that were not part of the original plan.

The improvements are part of a long-range strategy for preserving the historic character and natural beauty of the Soo Locks facilities site, and for promoting sustainable development on the site. Additional information and a copy of the master plan are available on the Detroit District Website at: www.lre.usace.army.mil

For additional information or questions on the Soo Locks, please call the Soo Area Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at (906) 635-3464 or call the Detroit District, Public Affairs Officer, Lynn Duerod at (313) 226-4680.

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