

BLAIR COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
AGENDA
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2021, 8:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 2B, 2ND FLOOR, COURTHOUSE

**Public meetings are being held both in-person and by conference call. To participate in the meeting please dial 1-408-419-1715 or 1-408-915-6290 and enter meeting number 2468097683#*

CALL TO ORDER – President Joe Keller

ROLL CALL – Melissa Harpster

- President Joe Keller
- Vice-President Tim Hite
- Secretary Galen Bickel
- Member Fred Miller
- Member Phil Riccio
- Member Chuck Gojmerac
- Member Sue Kovensky
- Central Blair Recreation Commission Director Mike Hofer
- Valley View Park Groundskeeper Dwayne Dittsworth
- Valley View Park Assistant Groundskeeper Dwayne Cox
- Public Works Paul Shaffer
- Maintenance Jim Pooler
- Commissioner Amy Webster
- Others –

OLD BUSINESS:

Approval of Meeting Minutes for the month of September 2021.

- Motion Second

Acceptance of Treasurers' Report for the month of September 2021.

- Motion Second

Sign Replacement.

- ✓ Revised Rules and Regulations – solicitor reviewed and approved.
- Status on updated park map.
- Other discussion.

Trail Signs.

- Status on Commissioners approval to rescind the Resolution that approved naming the trails after the eight-8 PIAA school team mascots.

DCNR Grant.

- Discussion/updates, etc.

Tree Removal/Tree Maintenance.

- See attached information from Tom Ford.

Removal of bridge abutments.

- Status update – Dwayne Dittsworth.

Road resurfacing:

- The areas that need to have the pavement replaced have been marked.
- Has the required PA one-call been placed for this project?

Items requested for approval consideration by the Commissioners:

- Resolution 376-2021, dated 09/09/21, approved an allocation of Park and Recreation Reserve Account #035 Funds for the repair of the parks power washer and the purchase of a second power washer for use at the park in an amount not to exceed \$600.00.

General Permit for Valley View Park Streambank stabilization:

- Update – has Donna Fisher provided direction on what we can and cannot do?

Valley View Park ADA Evaluation:

- Trina has been invited to attend the November or December Park and Recreation meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Invitation Received:

The Park and Recreation Advisory Board Members received an invitation to attend a dedication program for the newly constructed Morrison's Cove Gettysburg Memorial, which is to honor the 70 men from Morrison's Cove who fought at the Battle of Gettysburg on July 1-3 1863. The program will be held on Saturday, October 9, 2021 at the Morrison's Cove Memorial Park, 201 South Walnut Street, Martinsburg, PA beginning at 1 pm.

AYSO Soccer Fields:

Phone call received from Joe Landolfi, Athletic Director Bishop Guilfoyle expressing interest for the school to use the soccer fields in 2022.

Valley View Park Issues/Concerns:

BLAIR COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2021, 8:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 2B, 2ND FLOOR, COURTHOUSE

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Meeting Called to Order:

President Keller called the meeting to order.

Roll Call:

Members Present:

- Joe Keller, President
- Tim Hite, Vice-President
- Galen Bickel, Secretary
- Chuck Gojmerac
- Sue Kovensky

Members Absent:

- Fred Miller
- Phil Riccio

Others Present:

- Dwayne Dittsworth, Groundskeeper
- Jim Pooler, Maintenance
- Amy Webster, Commissioner
- Melissa Harpster, Administrative Office Coordinator Commissioners Office

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes:

President Keller called for corrections or changes to the minutes of August 2021. **There were no corrections or changes noted.**

Motion by Tim Hite, seconded by Chuck Gojmerac and unanimously approved to accept the minutes as prepared.

Acceptance of Treasurers' Report for the month of August 2021.

President Keller called for the Treasurers' Report.

Melissa Harpster presented the report for the month of August 2021. Mrs. Harpster stated that Assistant Finance Director Sarah Chuff prepared the report.

Motion by Chuck Gojmerac, seconded by Tim Hite and unanimously approved to accept the report as prepared.

Sign Replacement:

Melissa Harpster stated that Solicitor Karn reviewed the Rules and Regulations for the park and requested several changes. Mrs. Harpster stated that the solicitors requested changes have been made to the Rules and Regulations.

Discussion followed.

Joe Keller stated that he would contact Grant Wills in GIS regarding the need for an updated park map for placement on the new sign.

Discussion followed.

Trail Signs:

Commissioner Webster presented discussion regarding concerns for vandalism of the trail signs if named after the eight PIAA school mascots.

Discussion followed.

Motion by Tim Hite, seconded by Chuck Gojmerac and unanimously approved to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to eliminate the school name from the signs and just use the schools color.

DCNR Grant:

Joe Keller stated that it looks like preliminary design is still on track for November with anticipated approval by DCNR in December.

Discussion followed.

Tree Removal/Tree Maintenance:

Joe Keller stated that he would reach out to Tom Ford to see if he could attend our meeting in November. Mr. Keller stated that Mr. Ford should be able to provide clarification on herbicide use at the park and should be able to clarify who can apply them.

Tim Hite presented discussion concerning the cost of tree stump removal stating that if the county were to rental a stump grinder the cost would only be approximately \$5.00 per stump vs. \$80.00 per stump using a tree removal service.

Discussion followed.

Bridge Removal:

Joe Keller stated that DEP provided approval for the county to remove the washed out pedestrian bridge abutments.

The board requested that Dwayne Dittsworth, Groundskeeper proceed with removing the bridge abutments.

Items requested for approval consideration by the Commissioners:

Joe Keller stated that the Commissioners approved Resolution – 2021 approving an expenditure not to exceed \$600.00 for stain and the rental of a sprayer to stain the two-2 newest pavilions; and Resolution – 2021 approving an expenditure not to exceed \$5,000.00 to repair the roadway near the playground area.

NEW BUSINESS:

Power-washer:

Dwayne Dittsworth requested that the Board recommend to the Commissioners an allocation of Park and Recreation Reserve Account #035 Funds in an amount not to exceed \$150.00 to repair the park's current power washer; and an amount next to exceed \$450.00 for the purchase of a new power washer for use at the park.

Discussion followed.

Motion by Tim Hite, seconded by Chuck Gojmerac and unanimously approved to recommend to the Commissioners an allocation of Park and Recreation Reserve Account #035 Funds, in an amount not to exceed \$600.00 for the repair of the park's current power washer, and for the purchase of a new power washer for use at the park.

General Permit for Valley View Park Streambank Stabilization:

Joe Keller stated that the permit was issued last year.

Mr. Keller stated that he would reach out to Donna Fisher at the Conversation District to see if she would be able to stop by the park to provide the board with some direction on what can and cannot be done.

Discussion followed.

Valley View Park ADA Evaluation Summary:

Melissa Harpster stated that she provided the one-1 page Park ADA Evaluation Summary prepared by Mr. Macharola for the boards review.

Mrs. Harpster stated she would invite Trina Illig to an upcoming Park and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting to provide further discussion on ADA compliance, etc.

Discussion followed.

Adjournment:

With no further business to discuss, President Keller called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Chuck Gojmerac, seconded by Tim Hite and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting.

**COUNTY OF BLAIR
PARK AND RECREATION
INCOME STATEMENT**

	<u>SEPT 2021</u>	<u>YEAR-TO-DATE 2021</u>
Beginning Balance	\$ 160,406.01	\$ 134,109.63
Revenue		
Interest Applied	\$ 18.74	\$ 158.88
Pavillion Rentals	455.00	7,995.00
Soccer Field Lease Payment	-	-
Lakemont Park Rental	3,650.00	32,850.00
Lakemont Park Additional Rent	-	36,160.00
Refund of Prior Year Expenditure	-	-
Refund of Pavillion Rentals	-	-
Total Revenue	<u>\$ 4,123.74</u>	<u>\$ 77,163.88</u>
Expenses		
Electricity	\$ 95.97	\$ 815.46
Postage	43.75	121.40
Water	290.18	1,675.91
Advertising	-	666.94
Gasoline	162.20	1,060.47
Telephone	26.32	183.92
Trash	60.00	300.00
Penn State Arts Festival	-	-
CBRC Summer Playground	-	6,500.00
Employee Wages and Taxes	5,101.52	27,741.42
Background Checks and Drug Tests	-	100.00
Materials and Supplies	81.55	2,255.33
Vehicle Insurance	240.00	240.00
Park and Recreation Grant Awards	-	11,109.40
Park Improvements - Keller	1,846.79	1,846.79
Pavillion Electrical Project	-	-
Waterline Installation	-	-
Drainage and Grading Project	-	-
Tree Removal	11,200.00	11,200.00
Park Bench Plaques	-	75.00
Central Blair Summer Program	-	-
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 19,148.28</u>	<u>\$ 65,892.04</u>
Ending Balance	<u><u>\$ 145,381.47</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 145,381.47</u></u>

Parks & Rec
September 2021

ACCOUNT	ACCOUNT NAME	ORG	EFF DATE	REFERENCE	BEG. DEBITS	CREDITS	NET CHANGE	END BALANCE
PER	JNL	SRC						
035-40-101-00	Hourly Wages - ST	35101	9/9/2021	RUN: 1 WARRANT: 210909	2,318.99	0	2,318.99	
* 9		164 PRJ			2,420.00	0	4,738.99	
* 9		517 PRJ	9/23/2021	RUN: 1 WARRANT: 210923	0	0	4,738.99	4,738.99
35101-41030					0	0	4,738.99	
035-40-101-00	Er Medicare Tax	35101	9/9/2021	RUN: 1 WARRANT: 210909	33.62	0	33.62	
* 9		164 PRJ			35.09	0	68.71	
* 9		517 PRJ	9/23/2021	RUN: 1 WARRANT: 210923	0	0	68.71	68.71
35101-41500					0	0	68.71	
035-40-101-00	Er Social Security Tax	35101	9/9/2021	RUN: 1 WARRANT: 210909	143.78	0	143.78	
* 9		164 PRJ			150.04	0	293.82	
* 9		517 PRJ	9/23/2021	RUN: 1 WARRANT: 210923	0	0	293.82	293.82
35101-41510					0	0	293.82	

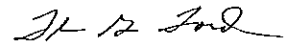
\$ 5,101.52 Total Due to the General Fund

Memorandum

Date: September 21, 2021

To: Ms. Amy Webster
Ms. Nicole Hemminger
Ms. Melissa Harpster
Mr. Joseph Keller
Mr. Jeff Hackenberg
Mr. Stan McKee

From: Thomas G. Ford, Area Commercial Horticulture Educator



Re: Tree Assessment at Valley View Park

At the request of Mr. Joseph Keller, I took the opportunity to walk the main park area at Valley View in advance of our upcoming meeting (November 4th) to assess the condition of the various landscape ornamentals that have been established in the park over the years. While at the park I had the opportunity to converse with a member of the Valley View Park maintenance staff who is charged with managing the 45 acres of land that lies within the park borders. I spent close to 4 hours at the park and evaluated the health and/or condition of over 60 trees in the main areas of the park.

Succinctly, there are many trees located in the park that are in a serious stage of decline/distress. While there is some insect/disease activity in the park, the major sources of plant injury are linked to abiotic disorders that should have been addressed years ago by professional arborists/horticulturists.

Almost 70% of the trees in the main areas of the park are dealing with stem girdling roots. Stem girdling roots can occur naturally, but because of the frequency of their occurrence at Valley View I suspect that they were caused primarily by poor landscape installation practices (improper planting) and improper maintenance practices. In some cases, some of the smaller girdling roots that are visible above grade can be removed/excised (with some risk) by a trained arborist/horticulturist.

Large girdling roots cannot be excised because their removal may cause the tree to die quickly. *When larger girdling roots are detected, it may be prudent to establish replacement trees prior to authorizing the complete removal of the tree by an arborist.

The large Scotts pines on the property are short-lived and are being impacted by Tip blight, Pitch Moths, Coniferous Bark Beetles, and Sapsuckers (bird). Scotts pines prefer low pH soils with a useful life of 15-20 years. These pine specimens in my opinion should all be removed. The county does not have the equipment, staff, or resources to prophylactically treat these trees each year for the array of pests and diseases that are predisposing them to decline. While I have looked at each Scotts pine in this main area, and there are some trees that are in better shape than others, I believe that the prompt removal of all specimens in these high traffic areas to be the best course of action for the County at this time.

In addition to the stem gridling root issues, the lack of mulching around most of the trees in the park has increased the incidence of mower blight and string trimmer injury (girdling). Wooden signposts that were set by maintenance staff years ago to accurately name trees in the park have not been moved or relocated as the trees have aged which is resulting in the injury of some specimens via girdling. **Once trees have become girdled, they will not thrive in the landscape.**

Hazardous trees are trees that are diagnosed with specific defects that could make them subject to catastrophic failure during wind and storm events. I cannot legally assess hazard trees as a Penn State Extension Educator, but there are a significant number of specimens that require some corrective pruning to eliminate limbs where significant bark inclusions are observed. Most of the larger trees on the property need some judicious pruning or thinning to improve tree health. **None of the trees in Valley View Park should be topped.**

Trees that show evidence of severe stem girdling roots may be subject to windfall and could pose a threat to people using the park. Hazard trees adjacent to playgrounds and pavilions should be considered for prompt removal if they are viewed as a hazard by an ISA Certified Arborist.

Red maples and at least one red oak tree in the park are suffering from iron and/or manganese deficiency. Soil tests should be taken around these chlorotic specimens so prescriptive recommendations can be made to lower soil pH and/or increase micronutrient levels. Failure to correct these nutritional/pH issues will result in the slow decline and death of these specimens.

The maintenance staff member pointed to several declining and dying trees near the amphitheater in the park. Some of the trees have declined due to grade changes in the surrounding area. I did not evaluate the entire park, but the quality of the woodlot is poor due to the lack of management by the County. Woodlands need to be managed by a competent forester and there needs to be some judicious thinning of the forest via a timber sale (selective cut) or via forest stand improvement. The county should consider bringing in a consultant forester to see if a timber sale would be cost effective and what revenue it may bring into the county. If a timber harvest is done correctly, it could provide the county with some funding to make improvements at the park.

In respect to current and past tree removal practices, all tops from removed trees should be ground and used as mulching materials around trees or be used to cover paths in the forest to lessen soil erosion. If a consultant forester is used, trees with value would be harvested and sold to the highest bidder. Consultant foresters get paid on a commission basis, so it behooves them to get the highest bids possible for the timber. Trees that are cut with no value may be used for firewood and or pulp. As per the park employee much of the cut wood is left to decay/rot on the forest floor. The county should be proactive in managing this forest resource.

The Valley View Park employee disclosed to me during my review of the trees adjacent to the amphitheater that there are plans to retrofit and/or replace it soon. While this project has merit, the emerging threat of Spotted Lanternfly in the Blair County area will make this area largely unusable due to the excretion of copious amounts of honeydew (sugar) during their feeding activity. The resulting rain of sugar laden excrement from above will discourage park usage in areas where there is considerable tree cover. The sugary laden honeydew will also cover the floor and the steps of the amphitheater and sooty mold will grow on the sugary substrate turning the wood black in color. In order to use this area once the Spotted Lanternfly gets established, the park staff would have to utilize a power washer to clean the honeydew off the wood surfaces almost daily. If an amphitheater or stage is to be built it may be prudent to build it out in the open in an area that can be serviced more readily by the modern restroom facilities and the larger parking area in the upper end of the park. The stage could be protected by a canopy and/or roof to allow for concerts and/or weddings. A minimal amount of landscaping can be used around the stage to direct sound and/or beautify the area. The absence of a tree canopy around the stage will allow the area to be used for weddings and concerts even if the Spotted Lanternfly population explodes as expected.

Joe Keller asked me to assist in developing a maintenance plan for the trees and landscape materials. This task is made more difficult because the county does not

apparently have anyone in their employment that has the prerequisite knowledge and/or training to effectively maintain and/or manage the plant materials in the park. The county should be employing an arborist/horticulturist that can apply pesticides as needed to the park grounds to control weeds/invasive species, control stinging insects, spray along right of ways, and manage pests and diseases in the landscape when detected. The person charged with managing the park should be carrying a valid Pennsylvania Applicator license in Categories 23 and Category 10. The lead maintenance person at Valley View should have some knowledge of landscape management practices and tree care.

The next section details my observations/recommendations for the majority of the trees on site. In walking the site, I started at the upper parking lot and made my way to the lower end of the park. A site plan that delineates and inventories each tree should be developed, but in the interim here is a quick written assessment of my findings.

Tree Species	Issue/recommendation
1. Japanese Zelkova	Girdling roots
2. White fir	Removal
3. White pine	OK
4. Japanese Zelkova	Girdling roots
5. Washington Hawthorn (3)	Pruning/ thinning
6. Birch	Dead wood removal
7. Serviceberry (3)	Dead wood removal thinning
8. Scotts pine	Girdle (removal)
9. Scotts pine *All	Removal of all specimens is recommended due to disease/coniferous bark beetles
10. Douglas fir (3)	Needle cast disease - Removal
11. Scotts pine	Removal
12. Sweetgum	Girdling root
13. Balsam fir	Adelgid - Removal
14. Linden	Girdling roots – thinning & dead wood removal
15. Honeylocust *multiple	Pruning- thinning – pests (minor)
16. Sweet gum	Girdling roots
17. White fir	Removal
18. Golden rain tree	Girdling due to signpost
19. Scotts pine	Pitch moth
20. Hedge maples (3)	Thinning and girdling

21. Young red oak	Mower blight
22. Scotts Pine	Pitch moth
23. Linden	Girdling roots – Dead wood - thinning
24. Sweet gum	Mower blight- girdling- no mulch
25. Crimson King maple	Planting depth, vandalism, improper pruning, no mulched circle, candidate for mower blight
26. Chestnut oak	No mulch – mower blight
27. Chestnut oak	Mower blight, pruning
28. Red oak	Anthracnose, slime flux, corrective pruning
29. Scotts pine (playground)	Tip blight - removal
30. Honey locust	Plant bug/mimosa webworm
31. Chinese elm	Mower blight, improper planting, stem girdling
32. Japanese tree lilacs	Mulching, mower blight, girdling
33. Redbud *multiple	Dead wood removal and thinning
34. Kousa dogwood	Mulching and thinning
35. Crabapple (2)	Thinning - mulching
36. Maple	Tar spot (disease) – hazard tree
37. Zelkova	Girdling roots
38. Zelkova	Girdling roots
39. Red oak	Girdling roots
40. Red oak * multiple	Girdling roots
41. Red maples *multiple	Manganese/iron deficiency (high pH) and planting depth and girdling roots
42. Red oak	Iron Deficiency (high pH)
43. Hemlock	Removal – pathogen or girdling

The final section of my report provides a visual record of my observations at the park. It is a separate attachment and can be reviewed independently of this memorandum. Most horticulturists and/or arborists would concur after looking at the photos that most of the plant materials in the managed areas of the park are in serious trouble and prompt intervention is needed. I look forward to our meeting on November 4th. If you have any questions, please email me at tgf2@psu.edu or call me at 814-937-1630.

Photographic Record Documenting Plant Issues at Valley View Park—9/21/2021 by Tom Ford, Penn State Extension



Photo 1: Pitch Moth

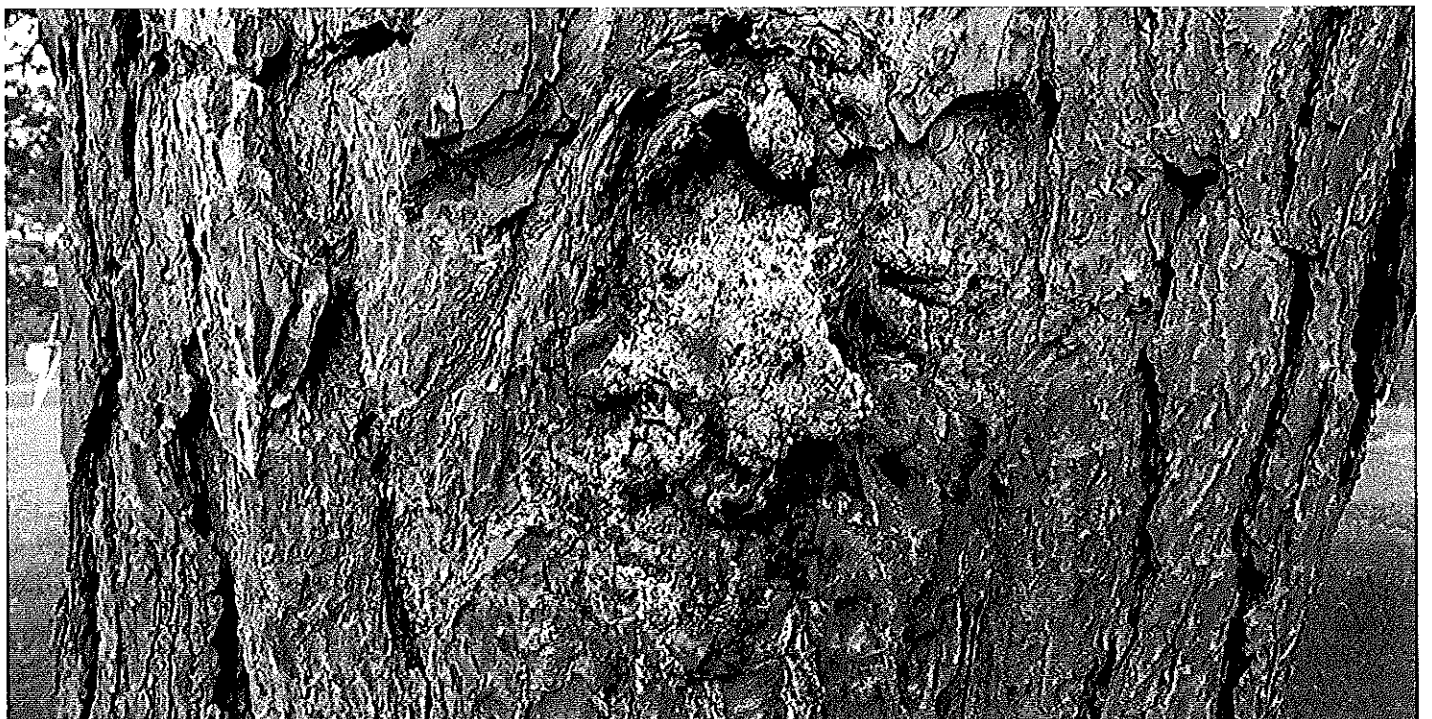


Photo 2: Pitch Moth

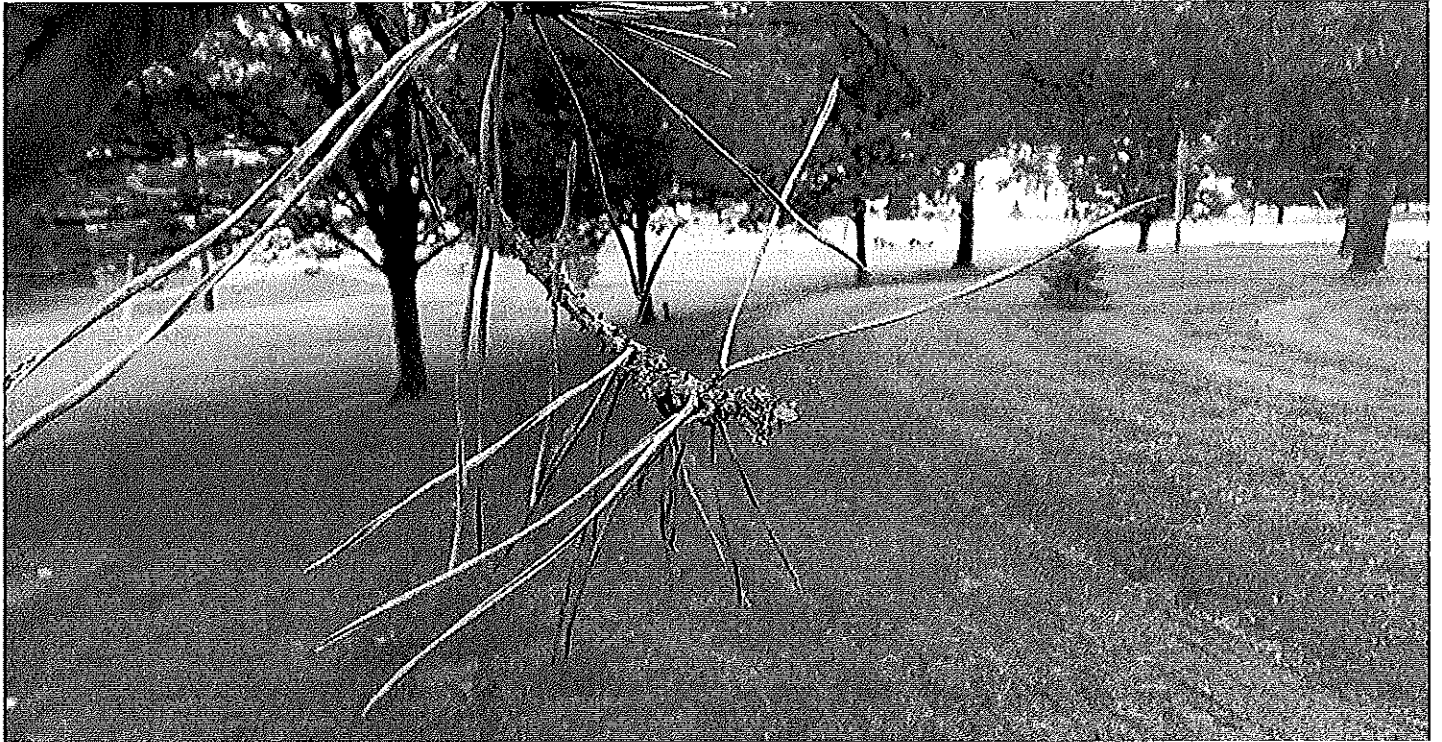


Photo 3: Diplodia Tip blight

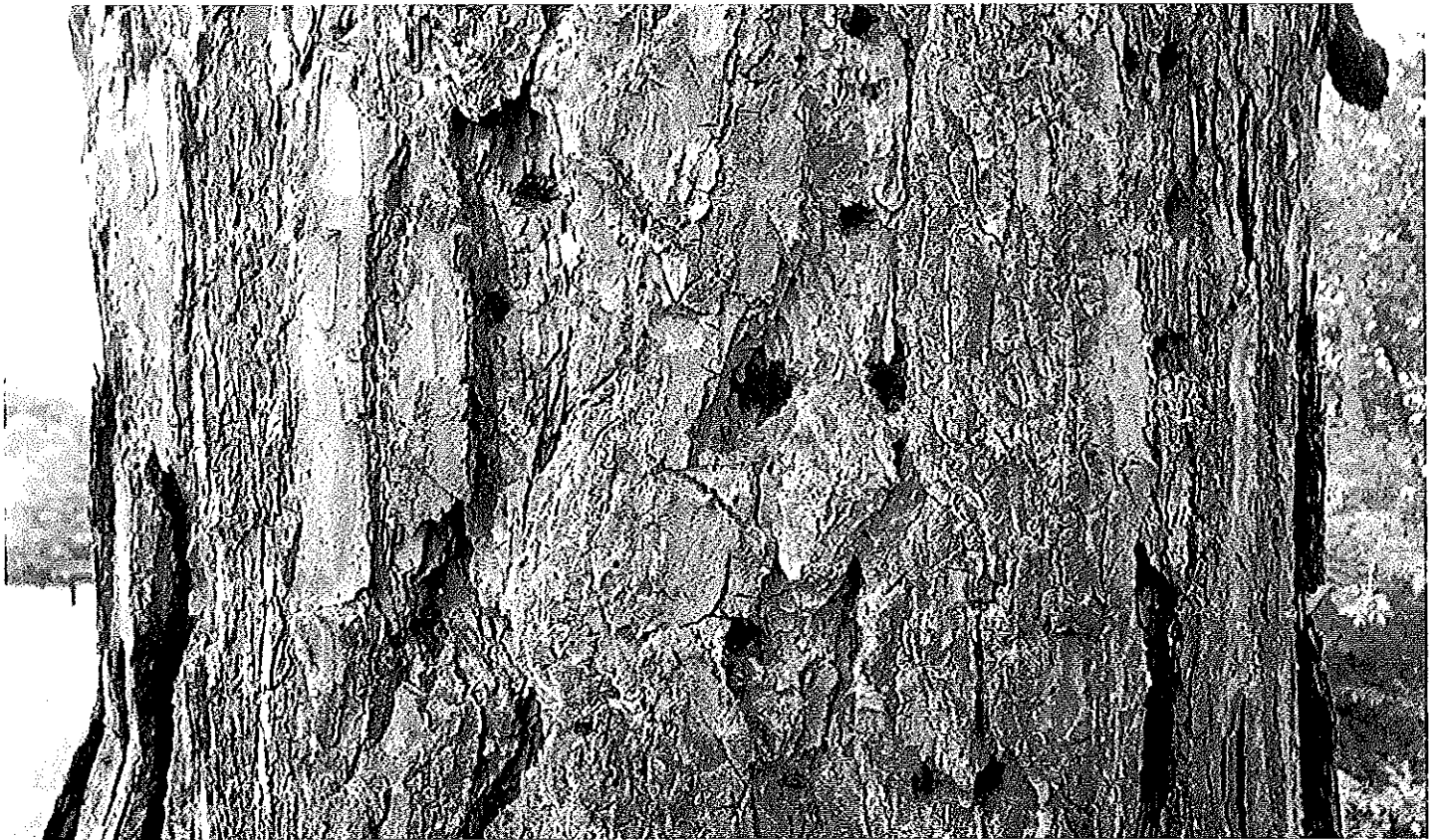


Photo 4: Coniferous bark beetle (small holes) and woodpecker damage



Photo 5: Stem Girdling Root Pine



Photo 6: Decline and death of pines due to disease and insects



Photo 7: White Fir—Decline (Aesthetically unpleasing)



Photo 8: Adelgid injury— Balsam Fir



Photo 9: Improper pruning practices that leads to canker development and/or decay



Photo 10: Post placement causing girdling injury and girdling roots



Photo 11: Tree removal in grove area that can de-stabilize the remaining trees and make them subject to windfall.



Photo 12: Bark inclusion— Hazard Tree?



Photo 13: Stem girdling roots



Photo 14: Stem girdling roots—Japanese Zelkova



Photo 15: Girdling roots— Red Oak



Photo 16: Black plastic used to limit weeds encourages surface rooting/girdling roots (Crabapple at entrance)



Photo 17: Iron deficiency in Red Oak (near front entrance) due to elevated soil pH



Photo 18: Iron/Manganese deficiency in maple due to elevated soil pH



Photo 19: Abnormal trunk flare due to subsurface girdling roots (front entrance)



Photo 20: Water line excavation adjacent to hazard tree will expedite tree decline and death



Photo 21: Hazard tree near lower parking area adjacent to restroom. The severe bark inclusion coupled with its proximity to a parking area justify its immediate removal



Photo 22: Chinese elm with girdling root and sign post causing additional girdling issues (xylem tissue is being crushed)



Photo 23: Slime flux on wound to root flare from string trimming/mowing



Photo 24: Glyphosate uptake injury on oak from historic misapplication



Photo 25: Crimson King Red Maple—No mulching predisposes the tree to string trimmer injury and mower blight



Photo 26: Vandalism to lower limbs of small trees



Photo 27: Improper pruning cuts (stubs) on Crimson King Maple which may facilitate canker/disease development



Photo 28: Improper planting/staking of immature red oak



Photo 29: The absence of mulch predisposes the tree to mower blight/ string trimmer injury. Once injured the tree is never going to perform well in the landscape

Photo 30: Newly planted red oak (as seen in Photo 29) with mower blight/string trimmer injury due to the absence of a mulched circle



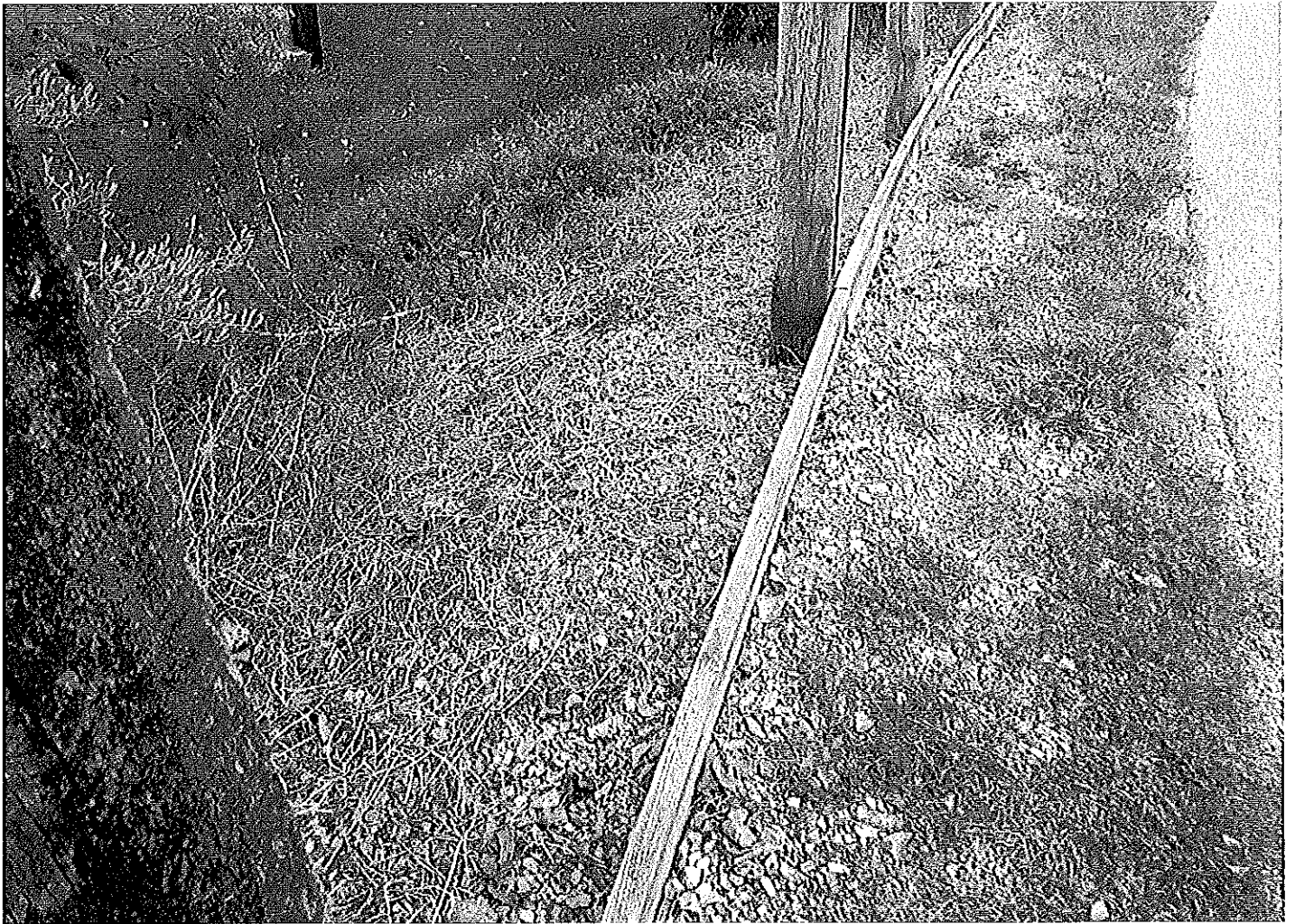


Photo 31: Improper use of herbicide on park property that can lead to erosion and soil instability.