



# City of Burnsville

100 Civic Center Parkway, Burnsville, MN 55337

Phone: 952-895-4400

Fax: 952-895-4404

[www.burnsville.org](http://www.burnsville.org)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Contact:

Caleb Ashling

Natural Resources

952-895-4543

## **TERRACE OAKS RESTORATION PROJECT SLATED TO START WEEK OF JAN. 28**

*Section of Cross Country Ski Trail will Close for Several Weeks; Main Loop will Remain Open*

A section of the Terrace Oaks cross country ski trail is expected to be closed for several weeks beginning as early as the week of Jan. 28 while tree removal is underway as part of the Terrace Oaks Restoration Project. The main trail loop will remain open and detours will be marked.

### **About the Project**

The City of Burnsville received an \$110,000 Conservation Partner Legacy Grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to restore a 26-acre portion of Terrace Oaks Park to oak savanna. The restoration will create a more beneficial habitat for wildflowers and wildlife, provide good conditions young oak trees to flourish, and make the park more aesthetically pleasing for visitors.

The first phase of the project is expected to start the week of Jan. 28. Over the course of several weeks, invasive shrubs and weedy trees will be removed, leaving typical savanna trees to help the area return to an open canopy. In spring, the area will be seeded with native prairie and woodland grasses. Later phases of the project will introduce controlled burns to stimulate plant growth, and wildflower seeding to increase pollinator habitat.

The project is expected to continue until 2021, or until all grant funding has been used. The City will continue to maintain the savanna with periodic controlled burns after the grant work is complete.

### **Returning to a Natural State**

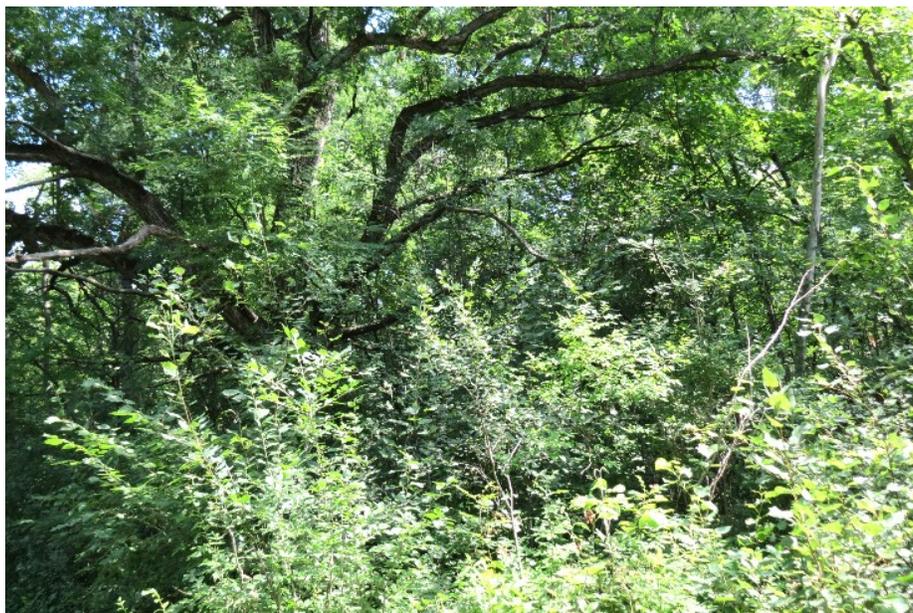
Oak savannas are characterized by widely spaced oaks with a highly diverse, prairie-like understory of grasses and wildflowers. They have become one of the rarest habitats in Minnesota largely due to changing land practices and invasion of Common Buckthorn.

Terrace Oaks Park was predominantly an oak savanna until about 60 years ago. The land was once maintained through grazing by wild animals and cattle, and wildfires that controlled weedy shrubs. When grazing and wildfires no longer occurred, the savanna was invaded by aggressive plants that created dense shade. The shade reduces wildlife habitat and prevents young oaks from receiving the sunlight they need.

*More information on the savanna restoration process, including before and after photos from a similar project undertaken in 2015, can be found at [www.burnsvillemn.gov/savanna](http://www.burnsvillemn.gov/savanna). For more information contact Caleb Ashling, Natural Resources Specialist at 952-895-4543 or [caleb.ashling@burnsvillemn.gov](mailto:caleb.ashling@burnsvillemn.gov).*

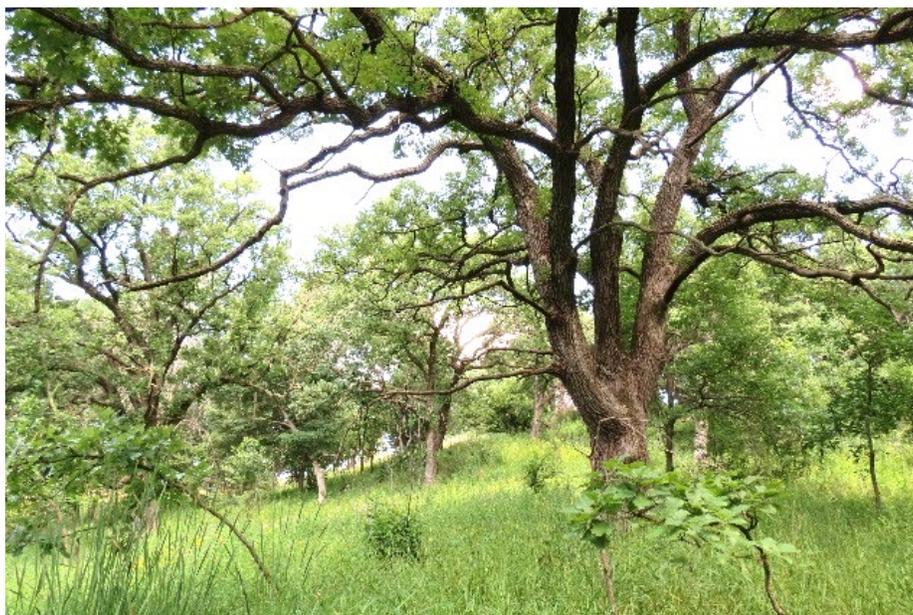
*(Photos Below)*

**Examples of Restoration Work**



**Cutline:**

*This photo was taken before an oak savanna restoration project at Terrace Oaks Park in 2015. It shows a large oak tree with dense buckthorn and other weedy trees underneath. These conditions stress the mature oaks and prevent the growth of oak seedlings.*



**Cutline:**

*This photo was taken after an oak savanna restoration project at Terrace Oaks Park in 2015. It shows a mature oak with room to thrive and young oak saplings underneath it. Native grasses prevent erosion and wildflowers provide pollinator habitat.*



## Terrace Oaks Park – Restoration Projects

**Cutline:**

*This map of Terrace Oaks Park shows where a past oak savanna restoration project occurred in 2015, and where the new oak savanna restoration project will occur beginning in 2018.*

***(high resolution images available upon request)***

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