

Hello,

We would like to share updates on the management activities occurring on stormwater land in your neighborhood. Pine Hill Farm neighborhood Homeowner's Association reached out to the City of Madison Engineering Division Stormwater utility in 2019 to inquire about how to improve the diversity and appearance of the vegetation surrounding the Pine Hill Dr stormwater pond system. Based on this request, and in consultation with the Stormwater Utility's Vegetation Coordinator, a temporary land use permit was granted to EC3 Environmental Consulting Group to do ecological restoration work on Pine Hill Dr Pond in 2020. EC3's work was sponsored by the Pine Hill Farm Neighborhood Association. The goal for this site is to have [native vegetation coverage](#) which is better able support our local insects, birds, and other wildlife. Beyond habitat value, native species also have deep roots systems - some species down to 15 feet - that prevent erosion, increase infiltration, and store carbon.



Prior to targeted management for native vegetation this pond contained relatively few species; primarily invasive plants such as reed canary grass, wild parsnip, Canada thistle, and cattails. Over the past few years, EC3 has done invasive species control through manual and chemical means as well as [conducted prescribed burns](#) in order to prepare the site for native ecosystem restoration. [Operation Fresh Start](#) has also helped do invasive brush control through a contract with the City. EC3's work, supported by your HOA, has created the conditions necessary for the next steps of the restoration process.

As you may have noticed, the process of ecological restoration can involve a bit of disturbance and may be relatively unattractive and sparse as the initial site preparation is completed. Site preparation can take a couple of years as it has for this site, but having a well-prepared site prior to seeding can make a huge difference to site success. As of fall 2023, this site is ready to be over-seeded with a diverse mix of native plant species. The seeds will be sowed in the wintertime, allowing the necessary winter stratification required for native seeds to germinate. Seed will be provided, and sowed by the stormwater utility.

As is expected for newly seeded sites, the first couple of years will continue to look a little sparse as native vegetation establishes. During this phase, 6-8" establishment mows by City staff may be conducted to help slow-growing native seedlings get the advantage over fast-establishing weeds. Expect to see plenty of weeds, but also native pioneer species such as golden alexander, black-eyed Susan, and wild bergamot. As the years progress, more and more native species will gain ground and ideally create a tight-knit, biodiverse vegetative community. The site will be monitored during this time and spot-control done on invasive species as needed.

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