

Because You Voted YES

In 2008 you voted to approve a 3/8% sales tax dedicated to MN outdoor heritage projects.

In the coming months, you will begin to see the results of your vote right here at Chester Woods.

In partnership with Friends of Chester Woods (FOCW), CW Park staff, Zumbro Valley Audubon and the Prairie Smoke chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts, Audubon MN submitted a grant for removal of buckthorn and other invasive species on three bluff prairie areas in SE MN: Chester Woods, Magelssen bluff in Rushford and Coon Hill in Red Wing.

These steep bluff areas are very difficult to work on, and being able to hire professional contractors for this type of work greatly advances restoration efforts.

You may well ask: Why bother removing buckthorn- it's just another kind of tree, isn't it?

Non-native buckthorn and other invasives quickly choke out native trees and woodland flora. They are not useful habitat for wildlife and birds, nor do the berries provide good nutrition. The species name for buckthorn is *Rhamnus cathartica*, which translated, means 'very strong purgative' – meaning it gives them diarrhea! Nor does it support the beneficial insects that birds need to raise their young.

In short, it's bad news, and this grant will help to control it and other similar invasives on these public lands.

Common Buckthorn



Photo from NatureInquiries.wordpress.com

About the grant

Your Yes vote created the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council that among other types of grants, offers Conservation Partners Legacy grants to benefit public lands other than state lands, or private lands with conservation easements. These were intended to promote partnerships of citizens groups and public agencies in caring for the land. Such partnerships are encouraged by requiring a 10% match of any funds requested, either by in-kind volunteer work or cash.

The response to this funding opportunity from across the state was impressive. Applications for over \$16 million worth of projects were submitted. Only \$4 million was available for funding this year, so only 35 out of 127 applications were successful.

We are proud to say that our Audubon grant was ranked #11 overall and was awarded \$125,000! Chester Woods will receive the largest portion of this amount to remove buckthorn from about 80 acres of park land. The grant also provides for 2 years of follow-up effort to ensure good control of this species. Work will begin fall of 2010.

Please note the Caution signs when you see them.

FOCW volunteers assisted with writing this grant and will be supporting this effort by providing 40 hrs of volunteer labor to assist the contractors by hauling and stacking the buckthorn, assisting with prairie burns and collecting and disbursing seed from native plants. The other partners provided their matches through either volunteer effort or cash.

Visit often and see your tax dollars at work!

