



## Greens Committee Newsletter

October 26, 2009

In my first newsletter dated October 8, 2009, I mentioned that a certified arborist had recently visited WWCC to inventory and inspect the trees on the course and to make observations and recommendations vis-à-vis the health of those trees. We have just received his report and recommendations and overall I would suggest the result was quite positive.

### **Summary**

In his summary, the arborist said:

“After looking over the trees on the course, it shows that the trees on the course have had some degree of management over the years. There is a good variety of species of trees on the course. This will be important to maintain to reduce the complications that monocultures can create. The overall age structure of the trees on the course appears to be that of a maturing group of trees. A number of large willows, silver maples and over mature cottonwoods comprise this group. There are also a high number of ash trees that will need to be addressed due to the threat of emerald ash borer (EAB) entering the area.”

### **Trees in Decline**

The arborist did pinpoint a number of trees that required attention, stating:

“There are a number of dead, dying and high risk trees that need to be taken down. The trees marked with the ‘X’s will need to be removed before they come down on their own. There is a Scotch pine on the course that has died from insect damage. The Ips beetle has caused the tree to die. It would be best if the wood and brush from this tree be destroyed or removed from the site, to limit the spread of the beetle. There is a large oak tree near the #7 tee that has significant crown dieback. The cost and effectiveness of remediation for this tree outweighs the cost to remove this tree so it would be best to remove it within the next year. A Norway spruce tree intruding the nearby green is also declining. No noticeable evidence of disease or insect infestation was present, but the tree is declining and will likely need to be removed within the next five years. This tree will need to be monitored for declining health in the future.”



The Scotch pine the arborist references was on #9 fairway and has since been cut down and removed in accordance with the recommendation. I believe the Norway spruce tree he speaks of is the one to the left of #6.

### **Ash Trees and the Emerald Ash Borer**

As you may know, the Emerald Ash Borer ("EAB") is an invasive wood boring beetle that feeds on the tissues under the bark of ash trees and kills them. This insect was found in southeast Wisconsin in August of 2008 and officials suggest it is just a matter of time before the insect spreads throughout the entire state.

The arborist addressed this issue as follows:

"There are a number of ash trees on the course. With the threat of emerald ash borer nearby, the future of these trees will need to be addressed. There are preventative treatments available to deter the damage and death due to EAB. These treatments should only be considered for ash trees that are in good health and condition before EAB is detected at or near the course. Some key individual ash trees may warrant treatment as it is deemed necessary.

The row of ash trees along the #6 fairway appear to be struggling. The amount and the distribution of deadwood within the crowns' of these trees indicate that they are stressed. A noticeable amount of fungal growth in the root zone of these ash trees could indicate that there is root rot issue with these trees. Because of this, a possible strategy to deal with these conditions would be to begin replacing these trees during a multi-year process. If three or so of the worst looking ash trees were taken down and replaced the first year, then a few more each year thereafter. This would renew the entire row of trees over a few years. By following this strategy, the overall appeal of this hole could be maintained, rather than replacing all the trees at once."

Since I couldn't picture any ash trees along #6 fairway I asked Ryan if he knew what trees the arborist was referring to. Ryan believes he meant the trees along #5 fairway. In any event, what I took away from this paragraph is that one must balance the cost to treat a tree against its current health and future survival possibility and that while the arborist believes there may be a few ash trees on the course that merit preventative EAB treatment, those along #5 do not.

### **Recommendations**

At the conclusion of his report the arborist made the following recommendations:

- Continue to identify and remove dead and dying trees



- Try and replant two trees for each tree that is removed
- Over the next 5 years, the club should start planting new hawthorns and/or crabapples to begin replacing the flowering trees that are aging.
- Prune existing trees, with an emphasis on the honey locusts and Siberian elms which have a high amount of deadwood in the crowns of the trees and would benefit greatly from a thorough pruning.
- Continue to monitor the trees for insect and disease issues.

### **Next Steps**

The Greens Committee will digest this report and provide its recommendations to the Board. It doesn't appear that there is anything that must be done immediately. As to identifying and removing dead trees and planting new trees to replace those that have died, that effort is already underway. The recommendation to implement a plan for replacing the older flowering trees is a good one and should be considered. In regards to the pruning recommendation, I would strongly support having such work done professionally, especially in the case of the taller trees. Wachtel is one provider of such service. And, finally, the issue of the ash trees is one that also requires attention. However, since these trees are not yet dead or infested, it appears there is some time available in which to develop a reasoned strategy for their treatment/removal and replacement.