

Public Outreach

The City of Fairbury regularly works with community stakeholders to inform and educate the general public. Every year the City hosts an Arbor Day celebration which involves community tree plantings in the local parks and always involves the local newspaper and radio station. Due to the size and scope of this project, outreach has already begun, press releases have already been issued, and the NRD, NRCS and Fairbury Public Schools have been contacted to schedule a volunteer planting day and/or celebration which will highlight the work being done at Crystal Springs park. In addition, the City regularly maintains a website that list spotlight projects, the renovations and tree plantings at Crystal will have a dedicated page in which we will be able to update the public on the project.



Who: Everyone

What: Arbor Day Celebration/
Project Re-Tree Planting

Where: Crystal Springs Park

When: May 9, 2019
9:00 a.m.

We hope to see you there!

FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL:

CITY OF FAIRBURY

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CRYSTAL SPRINGS RE-TREE PROJECT

*Special thanks to our partners,
Little Blue NRD
and
Nebraska Statewide Arboretum*



What happened to the trees at Crystal Springs?

Crystal Springs is a 73-acre park located on the outskirts of Fairbury that offers camping, fishing and other recreational activities. The spring fed lakes provide a unique opportunity for open water during migration to support waterfowl, harbors a diverse aquatic population, & sustains riparian associated terrestrial wildlife.

Groundwater at Crystal Springs is the primary source for the City of Fairbury's water supply. The park is located in the wellhead protection area, surrounded by 400 acres of Conservation Reserve and Wetland along with a mile-wide city owned buffer of trees and riparian vegetation adjacent to the Little Blue River.

Since 1934, the Fairbury Water Department has worked diligently to protect this beautiful recreation area and its natural water supply. However, this park is now facing a serious threat to its tree stock which will adversely impact the beauty and functionality of the park along with the wildlife habitat in the area. Aging tree stock and the quickly approaching Emerald Ash Borer jeopardize over 200 trees and 50% of the park's stock.

In preparation for this loss, and as recommended by our district forester, the City is planning a phased tree replacement program over the next two years.

Site prep and tree removal involving trees designated unhealthy in the 2014 tree inventory and at-risk ash trees has already begun to make space for a new stock of diverse tree species that will serve to provide wildlife habitat, improve soil quality, protect water quality, control erosion, and provide pleasing aesthetic value to the park.

The City is scheduled to work with the NRD and the Nebraska Arboretum to develop a planting plan for the park. As part of this plan we expect to plant and maintain roughly 200 trees total in the 2019 and 2020 planting seasons.

Why do we need to replace the trees?

In 1934, Crystal Springs park was established to protect one of the City's main water sources. The ability of trees and native vegetation to provide phytoremediation at this location plays a vital role in this effort and as nitrate levels increased the City continues to use these best management practices to ensure a safe water supply.

In 1994, the park's lakes had become inundated by overland runoff and floodwater. The banks eroded, the lakes filled with sediment and could not support aquatic habitat. The NRD, DEQ and the State Arboretum helped the City to establish trees that armor the banks and assist in erosion control thus reducing the sediment deposits in the lakes and normalizing the nutrient levels that support aquatic habitat. The trees planted in 1994



continue to provide the support that they were initially installed for, however; with the emerald ash borer threat we expect to lose a majority of these trees. This loss would once again jeopardize the lakes and habitat.

The year-round supply of open water and safe nesting habitat make Crystal Springs park a large migratory bird and wildlife sanctuary. The existing trees provide important nesting, food and shelter for both avian and terrestrial wildlife. As a result, at risk tree stock will need to be replaced with large maturing, deep rooted, mast producing trees to continue to provide this support.

Wildlife viewing, fishing and general outdoor enjoyment make Crystal Springs park a point of interest for local residents and travelers. Due to the continued efforts of the City, this park has become a beautiful recreational facility that draws on average 190 campers per week in peak season. Whether there to fish in the clear lakes, catch a glimpse of the rare wildlife, or just to relax at one of the shaded camp sites, people are drawn to the beauty of this park and we want to keep it that way.