

Tree removal and replacement will revive key piece of city's historic Kessler Park and Boulevard System

March 16, 2007—Beginning today, Indy Parks and Recreation will begin removing approximately 77 stressed and hazardous trees along Burdsal Parkway to clear the way for planting nearly 200 trees this spring. Indy Parks' forestry crews will be working the mile—long corridor from White River Parkway, East Drive (west of Riverside Park's Taggart Memorial) to Watkins Park and Fall Creek Boulevard.

The Burdsal Parkway renovation is a continuing step in the restoration of the George Kessler Boulevard System (1909), the 3,400 acre blueprint for Indianapolis' original park, greenway, and transportation network. The Kessler System, which includes 12 parks, six parkways and two boulevards, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003, and is one of the largest park and boulevard listings in the country. Kessler planned Burdsal Parkway to connect Riverside Park to Fall Creek Parkway and Boulevard.

In addition to removing hazardous trees, forestry crews will be removing the Norway Maple species, which is identified as a "noxious weed", which is an invasive species that threatens the health of nearby native trees and plants. The new trees will provide several benefits to the city: shade for cooling nearby houses, year round colorful and fragrant gateways to surrounding neighborhoods, cleaner air, improved drainage, and decreased flooding.

The project is funded through a \$35,000 grant from the Efroymson Fund through the Indianapolis Parks Foundation for the renovation of the historic Burdsal Parkway vegetation, including medians and tree lawns. More than 100 additional trees and shrubs will be planted when further funds become available.

Renovation work will be completed late spring. Burdsal Parkway and the entire Kessler System will be on display in September, when Indy Parks welcomes more than 10,000 delegates and vendors to the 2007 National Recreation and Park Association Congress.

About George Kessler

In 1908, George Kessler, the nationally known landscape architect and designer of ideal American Cities, was hired by the City of Indianapolis to layout the ideal plan for growth. Kessler's hiring by the city was strongly encouraged by the Commercial Club, the precursor to the Chamber of Commerce, because they viewed this plan as vital to Indianapolis being competitive as a world-class city. In 2003, Kessler's plan, called the "Indianapolis Park and Boulevard System," was affirmed as a nationally significant landscape by its acceptance to the National Register of Historic Places.

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