

LANDCARE AGENDA
 Wednesday, May 6, 2026 9 AM
Montreat Town Hall

Call to Order
Moment of Silence
Call for Quorum

Entity	Name	Vote	Pres
MLC Chair	George Sawyer		
MLC Vice Chair, NWF Comm. Wildlife	Bill Neely		
MLC Treasurer, Town Representative	Jean Norris		
MLC Secretary, Town Representative	Kathy Putnam		
MLC Town Commissioner	Jane Alexander		
Cottagers Wilderness & Open Space	Beth Fountain		
Montreat College	Josh Holbrook		
Montreat Conference Center (MCC/MRA)	Tracy Bailey		
Montreat Conference Center (MCC/MRA)	Martha Todd Sloan		
MCC/MRA -Wilderness Committee	Jason Nanz		
MPC(USA) Earth Ministry Team	Hal Demerest		
Quorum: $11/2 + 1 = 6.5 = 7$ voting members	TOTAL		

Adoption of Agenda
Approval of April Minutes
Treasurer’s Report

-----Public Comments-----

Entity Reports

- Town of Montreat
- MRA
- Montreat College
- Cottagers Wilderness and Open Space
- Earth Ministry

Team Reports

- Flat Creek Crossing
- Community Wildlife Habitat
- Landcare Festival
- Firewise

- BearWise
- Hemlock Restoration
- Children and Outdoors, Kids in Parks, and Eco-Explore

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Review of Town of Montreat greenspace map/Bill Roberts' planting idea

NEW BUSINESS

Next meeting: June 3, 2026

Adjourn

LANDCARE MINUTES
 Wednesday, April 1, 2026 9 AM
Montreat Town Hall

Call to Order
Moment of Silence
Call for Quorum

Entity	Name	Vote	Pres
MLC Chair	George Sawyer	Y	X
MLC Vice Chair, NWF Comm. Wildlife	Bill Neely	Y	X
MLC Treasurer, Town Representative	Jean Norris	Y	X
MLC Secretary, Town Representative	Kathy Putnam	Y	X
MLC Town Commissioner	Jane Alexander	Y	X
Cottagers Wilderness & Open Space	Beth Fountain		
Montreat College	Josh Holbrook	Y	X
Montreat Conference Center (MCC/MRA)	Tracy Bailey		
Montreat Conference Center (MCC/MRA)	Martha Todd Sloan	Y	X
MCC/MRA -Wilderness Committee	Jason Nanz	Y	X
MPC(USA) Earth Ministry Team	Hal Demerest	Y	X
Quorum: 11/2 + 1 = 6.5 = 7 voting members	TOTAL	9	9

Adoption of Agenda
Approval of March Minutes
Treasurer’s Report

-----Public Comments-----

Entity Reports

- Town of Montreat: Jane Alexander reported that the Town has been publicizing the Landcare Festival.
- MRA: Jason Nanz said volunteers from two colleges disassembled the old Harry Bryan bridge and construction on the new one starts this week. April public hikes are planned including a bird hike (4/25, 9a) with Bill Sanderson.
- Montreat College: Josh Holbrook reported that he had good meeting with Bill Seaman and others from Flat Creek 2040 re: brook trout restoration. It appears that Flat Creek upstream from Lake Susan is largely clear of fish. He said there may need to be a plan for reintroduction.
- Cottagers Wilderness and Open Space. No report.
- Earth Ministry. No report.

Team Reports

- Flat Creek Crossing. Jean Norris advised that while work is happening, design modifications have been needed due to creek sides having changed in Helene. She reported that finger boulders have been placed and there will be steppers placed near the picnic area. The sensory garden is taking shape. There will be one stormwater catchment device to collect water from the parking area. She said the \$614,000 proposal to the Helene Recovery Fund includes two ADA-compliant footbridges on the project, as well as site prep and engineering costs.
- Community Wildlife Habitat: No report.
- Landcare Festival: Kathy Putnam reported that everything was on track for the April 11 event.
- Firewise. No report.
- BearWise. No report.
- Hemlock Restoration. There was a hemlock assessment in ROW earlier this week.
- Children and Outdoors, Kids in Parks, and Eco-Kids. No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Review of Town of Montreat greenspace map/Bill Roberts' planting idea. Jane Alexander sent map to several committee members. George will send to all committee members. Tabled until committee members have chance to receive and review maps.

NEW BUSINESS

- Funding and/or endorsement request for Caleb Lloyd's Montreat College green space project. (*Moved up to first order of business.*) Montreat College senior Caleb Lloyd presented his project and asked for the Landcare Committee's endorsement of the project and financial assistance of \$350. He explained that the project will provide much-needed open green space for Montreat College students. He has a commitment from the college's garden club will maintain the area. The \$350 would pay for the woodchipper needed for the rhododendron that will be cleared on the plot. He and Joshua Holbrook confirmed that Montreat College's insurance will cover the project. Bill Neely made the motion to endorse and fund at \$350; Jason Nanz second. Approved unanimously. (*Copy of proposal attached to meeting minutes.*)

Next meeting: May 6, 2026

Adjourn: Bill Neely moved; Jane Alexander 2nd.

Increased Accessible Green Space

Project Proposal, Montreat College

Caleb Lloyd

March 25, 2026

Summary:

This project will create usable green space for the student body of Montreat College and the surrounding Montreat community by removing overcrowded rhododendron groves and other vegetation from ~0.5 acres of Montreat College property. This green space will retain its mature trees and will provide a peaceful area for the student body to recreate, relax and learn about their local hardwood forests. This project will culminate in a one-day event where volunteers will help facilitate a lasting improvement to the beautiful Montreat campus. Volunteers will largely be made of students, but community members are also welcome to join. The overcrowded brush will be mulched on site for use on pathways and as a means of erosion mitigation. Caleb Lloyd will serve as the program coordinator and will manage all volunteer recruitment, on-site supervision and equipment acquisition as needed. Any contribution toward project requirements is greatly appreciated and will result in a gratuitous mention on the day of the event. Project requirements include:

- 6 pairs of hedge cutting loppers for single day use
- 6 garden rakes for single day use
- 1-2 wheelbarrows for single day use

- | Needs | Amount |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Ear plugs | \$ 15.00 |
| Safety Glasses | \$ 34.00 |
| Woodchipper | \$ 350.00 |
| Additional Fuel | \$ 20.00 |
| Total: | \$ 420.00 |

Background:

- Community need:*
 - This project will provide Montreat College students with ~0.5 acres of usable, open forest for recreation, relaxation and learning opportunities. The hillside where this project will take place is completely choked out by large Rhododendron groves, completely blocking student access to the space. Furthermore, there are existing mature trees on this hillside that, when cleared, will provide a plethora of great hammock and slack-line locations.
 - The Montreat College campus is full of beautiful buildings, local history and pristine creeks but it does not currently have any designated space for students to enjoy the natural beauty of the local forests without getting off campus. While students could in theory enjoy the forests directly around the creeks, these areas are largely too steep to be widely accessible and too full of shrubs and briars to enjoy regularly.

- Forest Management

- Rhododendron is a common plant to anyone in the southern Appalachian Mountains. While this plant is endemic and produces stunning pink flowers, it can also become a major hinderance to stratified habitats, and recreational pursuits. According to the U.S.F.S., Rhododendron easily crowds out other vegetation and often acts like an invasive species in its competitive superiority to other native plants (Anderson, 2008). This domination of the mid-story level in forest succession creates a homogenized layer that is almost completely impermeable for other species (Anderson, 2008). This means that desirable hardwoods like Red Maple, Red Oak and Yellow Poplar will likely not have the opportunity to mature, keeping the forest from completing its natural successional arc (Anderson 2008). If left unchecked, this reality will significantly reduce the biodiversity in the local area. Additional research has found that the removal of rhododendron and the utilization of prescribed fire has beneficial effects on the diversity of bees and other plant species (Ulyshen et al 2022). In situations like this one where prescribed fire is not a viable option, that same research indicates that while the results are slower, merely removing the rhododendron does still have a positive effect on the local bee populations (Ulyshen 2022).
- While research from the U.S.F.S. and others have indicated that Rhododendron may be allelopathic, and therefore potentially toxic in a mulched form, there is no indication that rhododendron mulch actually lives up to these claims (2008). As an organic mulch, Rhododendron will likely increase the acidity of the soil slightly (Bell et al. 2009). This is not a concern for the project area because the dominant tree species thrive in the acidic soil (USFS 2008).
- References

Anderson, M. (2008). *Rhododendron Maximum*. Usda.gov.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/database/feis/plants/shrub/rhomas/all.html#MANAGEMENT%20CONSIDERATIONS>

Bell, N., Sullivan, D. M., & Cook, T. (2009, March). *Mulching woody ornamentals with organic materials*. OSU Extension Service.

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/ec-1629-mulching-woody-ornamentals-organic-materials>

Ulyshen, M., Elliott, K., Scott, J., Horn, S., Clinton, P., Liu, N., Miniati, C. F., Caldwell, P., Oishi, C., Knoepp, J., & Bolstad, P. (2022). Effects of Rhododendron removal and prescribed fire on bees and plants in the southern Appalachians. *Ecology and Evolution*, 12(3). <https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.8677>

- Community Participation^{1*}
 - This event will be carried out largely by the Montreat College student body, but the larger Montreat and Black Mountain community is welcome and encouraged to join in the fun of the event. The student body, faculty, staff and local residents will be notified about this project and invited via fliers, personal conversations and campus-wide emails leading up to the day of the event. Each student and resident involved in this project will be able to look back on this space and know that they helped create a meaningful change where the benefits far outlast the effort to make it. The collaborative effort will also work to strengthen the tight relationship between college students and the wider community.
- Relationship to the Tbilisi objectives:*
 - **Knowledge:** This project will help Montreat College students grow in their knowledge of and appreciation for their local environment. Despite the miles of trails accessible from campus, many Montreat students do not feel comfortable exploring their local area due to the ruggedness of the trails, and the daunting elevation gain required to summit any of the surrounding peaks.
 - **Participation:** Because of the nature of this project, each community member will have the opportunity to actively participate in the improvement of the Montreat College campus. Also, each community member will learn about erosion mitigation and the importance of suitable habitat to improve biodiversity and human enjoyment.
- Community Benefits*
 - This project will effectively turn an unused and overlooked piece of ground into a usable, low maintenance park for the use of Montreat College personnel. While it is easily not the biggest area around, this project has the potential to be one of the most used spaces on Montreat's Campus. Also, this project area is one of the most central locations on campus, ensuring that all students and residents have ample opportunity to enjoy it.
- Future maintenance
 - This project will require almost no maintenance for years to come. There will likely be new growth that happens due to the increase of sunlight that will reach the forest floor, but these plants will not cause any issues until they get too tall to walk around or over. The Garden club at Montreat College will oversee the on-going maintenance of the space beginning in the fall of 2026. They will be responsible for the removal of any trash or unwanted debris and will be given access to plant native flowers in space as they see fit for the continual beautification of the area.

* These sections fulfil the requirements of the NC Environmental Education certification process

Details:

- Site

- Location details

- As seen in the following figures, the project area lies behind McGregor residence hall and Anderson residence hall on the Montreat College campus, near the intersections of Missouri Rd., Appalachian way and Geneva place.
 - The ~0.5 acre parcel is divided into three plots for ease of project clarity and execution.
 - Plot 1, ~0.11 acres (will be cleared before event)
 - Plot 2, ~0.23 acres
 - Plot 3, ~0.15 acres

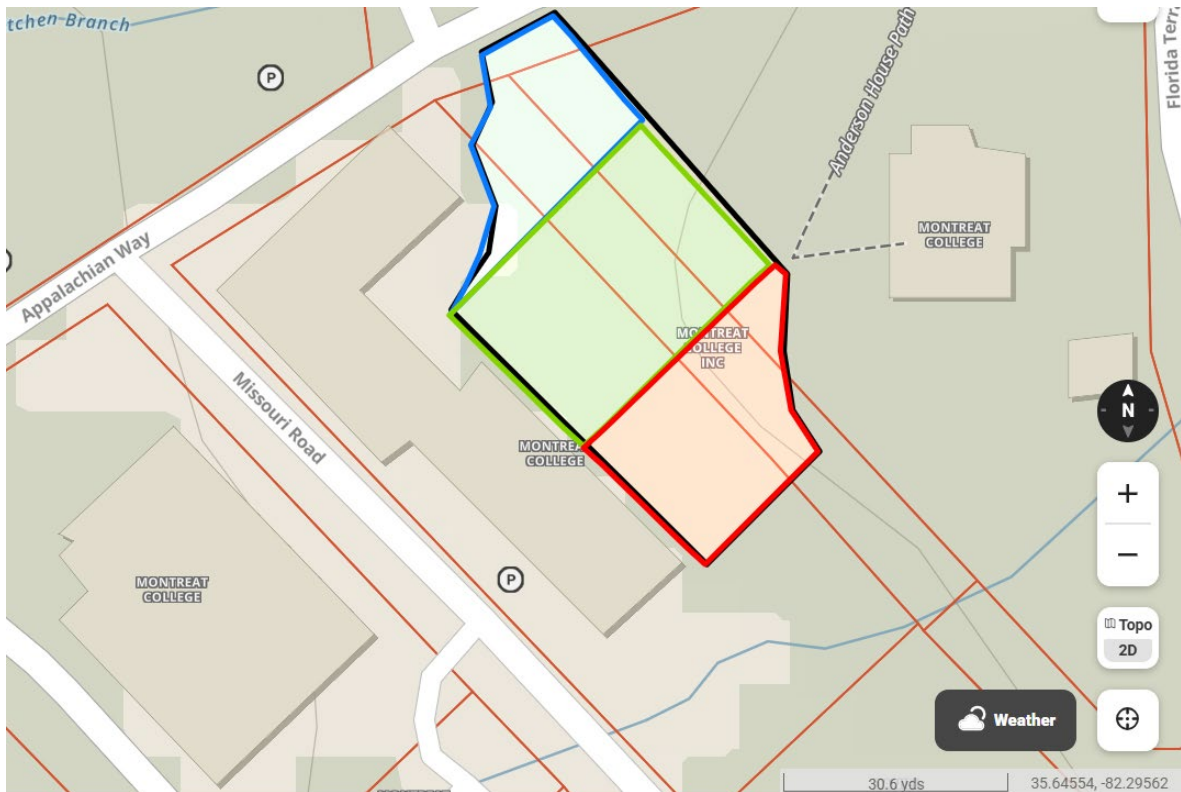


Figure 1: Topographic view of project area including land ownership divided into three plots. Plot 1 (Blue, ~0.15 acres), Plot 2 (Green, ~0.23 acres), Plot 3 (Red, ~0.15 acres).

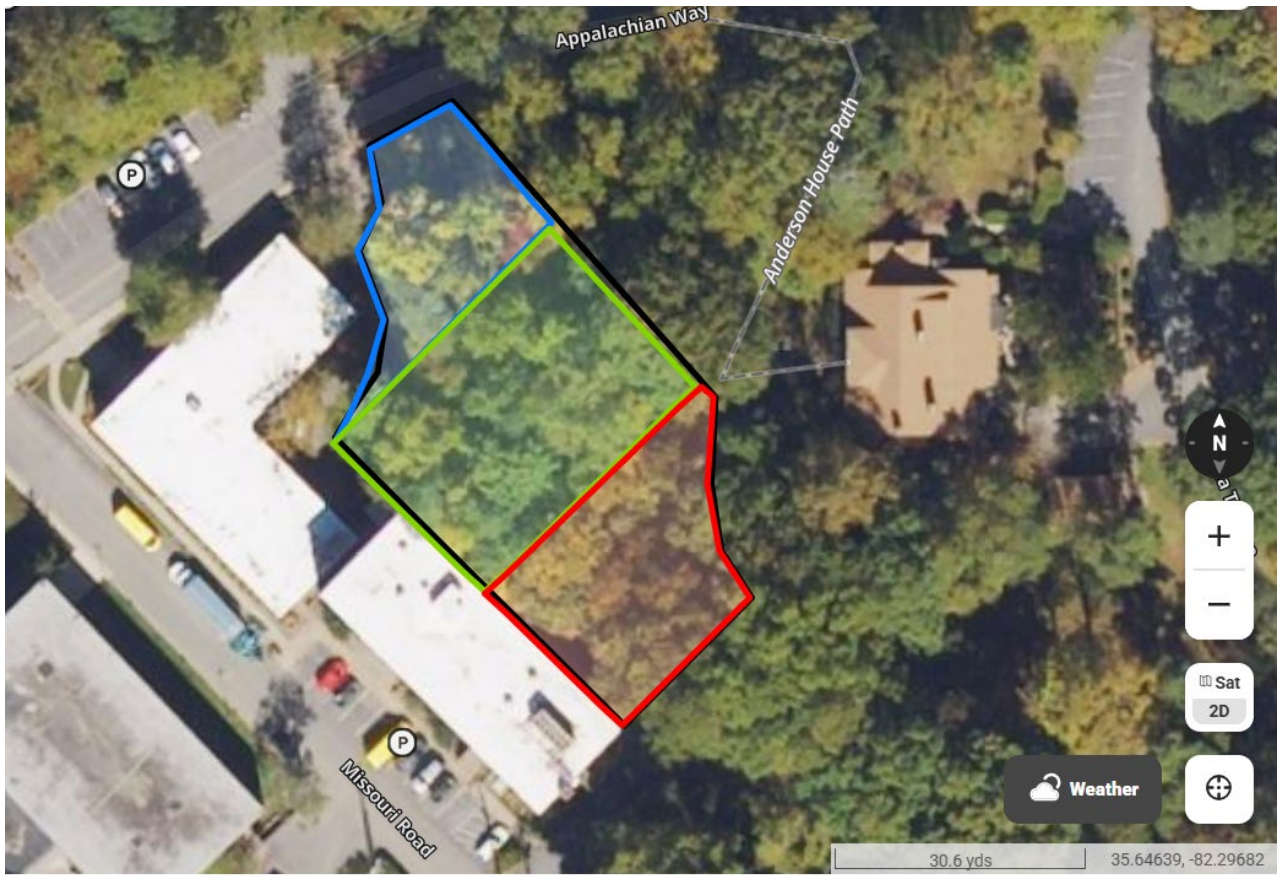


Figure 2: Satellite imagery of project area divided into three plots

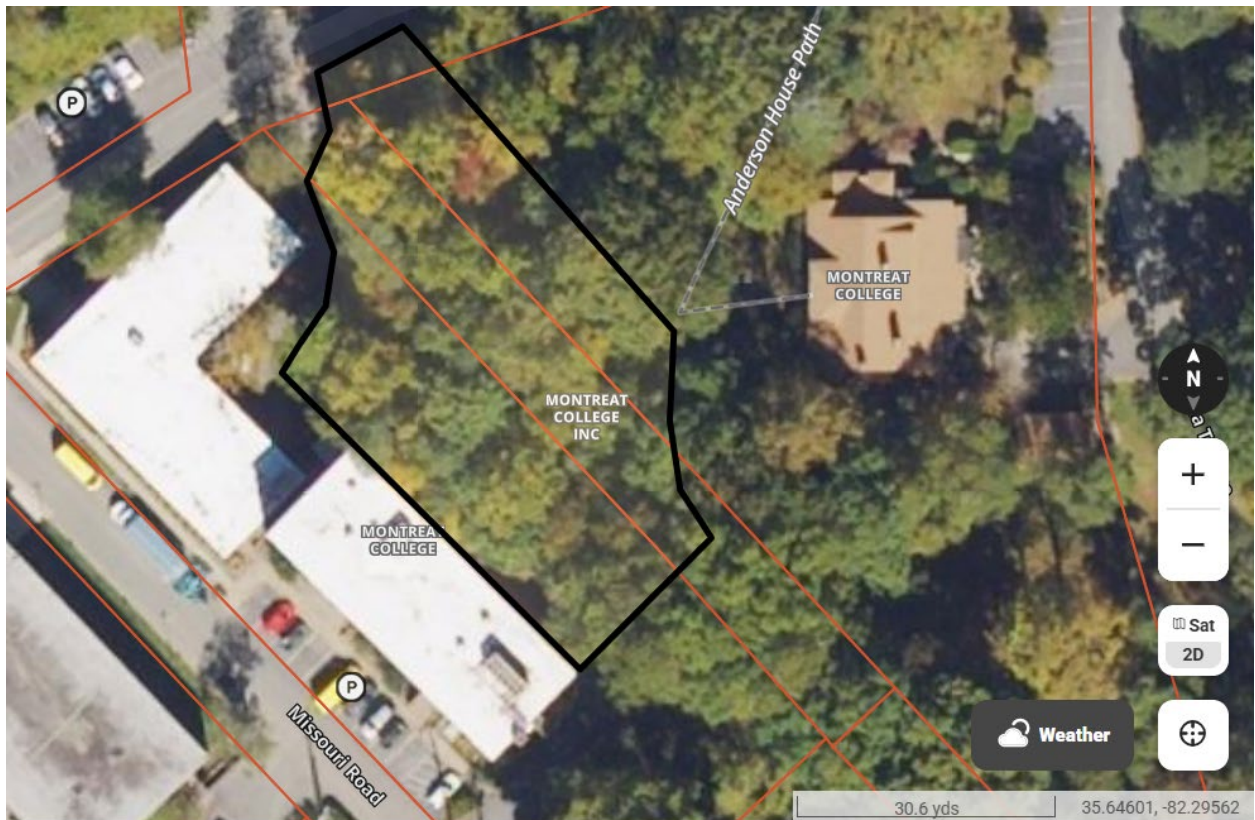


Figure 3: Satellite imagery showing landownership and entire project area in black outline

- **Cost:**

Anticipated costs

1. Volunteer PPE
 - a. Earplugs: \$15
 - b. Safety Glasses: \$34
2. Woodchipper
 - a. Rental: \$350
 - b. Additional fuel: \$20
3. Total: \$420

Payment

Project costs will be covered by potential corporate and private sponsors from the local area. Anticipated coverage is the entirety of project costs. If no corporate sponsors contribute to the project, remaining funds will be covered by the 2025-26 Residents life budget or the 2025-26 Honors budget in addition to private individual contributions.

- **Procedure:**

Preparation

1. Each of the three plots will be marked with ground flags, following the online map coordinates
2. Within each plot, large trees and healthy rhododendrons will be flagged with green flagging tape to indicate their intended preservation. Special care will be given to vegetation on steep slopes to prevent erosion.
3. Once previous step is complete plot 1 (Blue) will be cleared of all sickly or overcrowded vegetation by program coordinator
 - a. All vegetation will be cut flush with the ground or as close to flush as possible, and all roots will be left in the soil to help with erosion mitigation.
 - b. Cut debris will be stacked for future processing.
4. Event fliers will be posted around campus at least two weeks prior to event to inform the community of the project goals and get people interested in helping
5. Select individuals with previous chainsaw experience will be asked to operate a chainsaw during the event.
 - a. Prior to the event, these individuals will be given a safety briefing including detailed instructions on the objectives of the project.

- b. Some of these individuals will also be able to run the woodchipper
6. Woodchipper rental will be reserved for Friday, April 10 through the weekend. TKC will pick up the rental from Sunbelt Rentals in Asheville after 12:00pm on Friday.
7. On the day before the event, all parking spots directly next to project area will be blocked off by campus safety.

Project Event (April 11)

1. Chainsaw specialists will arrive by 9:15 am and will decide on specific areas to start cutting.
2. Volunteers will arrive at 9:30am and will be given an introduction to the event. This will include:
 - a. A safety briefing describing how to safely remove smaller stemmed vegetation and how to work near chainsaws, including a required liability waiver from Montreat College.
 - b. An explanation of how to cut flush with the ground and the importance of erosion mitigation
 - c. An overall explanation of the purpose and goals of the event
 - d. Recognition of the sponsors of the event
 - e. Dispersal of PPE (safety glasses, ear plugs and gloves if volunteers do not have them)
 - f. Encouragement to hydrate and take breaks when needed
3. Program coordinator will show all volunteers the desired result by walking them through the previously cleared section.
4. Volunteers will remove the brush from the hillside as specified by the briefing and will drag the brush to the chipper.
 - a. Two preselected volunteers will be running the chipper at all times, and the mulch will be piled up in the first plot for later use.
5. At 12:00pm volunteers will be instructed to take a lunch break. A cheeseburger lunch will be provided in appreciation for all volunteers. The food will be catered by the Montreat dining staff.
6. At 12:30 pm all remaining volunteers will continue working on the hillside as before.
 - a. If there is time, volunteers will start spreading the woodchips throughout the project area, concentrating on pathways and steep slopes
7. At 3:00pm all volunteers will stop working and convene for a final debrief of the day, as well as a time for the program coordinator to thank them all for their work
8. At 3:15 pm all volunteers will appreciate the work they did and head out.
9. Woodchipper rental will be returned by 9:00 am on Monday, April 13 by TKC.

Post Event

1. Project coordinator will spread remaining wood chips throughout the area and remove all flagging tape and any trash or debris left from the volunteers.