



Your Consulting Arborist

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April 22, 2026

Burke Station Square HOA
Susan, HOA President
5820 Ridge Ford Drive

Burke, VA 22015

RE: April 2026 Tree Management Report for Burke Station Square Common Areas

Dear Burke Station Square Association:

Following are the results of my field evaluation of trees on the Burke Station Square HOA property for 2026. I focused on the natural areas along the stream valley, especially where it backs to homes and is adjacent to roadways. Added this year is the area behind the lots east of Ridge Ford Drive which had not been previously included in the scope. I also assessed the grove of oak trees in the pool complex that are of high importance to the neighborhood and an owner request for evaluation of a tree behind 9006 Brook Ford Rd. The results of my evaluation follow. Please note, most of the work for this year's review remains the removal of trees due to potential risk to people and property. These are the highest priority as a result of risk to residents and properties. In addition, I encourage the association to treat the group of oaks in the picnic area adjacent to the pool complex.

All items identified for work are listed in the attached spreadsheet. Their locations are approximated on the Google Earth map provided. They have been tagged in the field with an aluminum tag. The number on the tag corresponds to the corresponding column in the spreadsheet. This should allow contractors to easily locate and identify them in the field. Should there be any difficulty in identifying any of the trees, please contact me.

I have also included a specification for contractors to follow while completing the services. If there are any questions regarding the specifications, I can be available to clarify where necessary.

Removals

I identified 15 trees that should be prioritized for removal as they are dead and at risk of failing and causing damage or injury. All these trees are considered a priority 1 or 2 for removal this year's review.

The wood from these removals can remain within the save areas. The trees can, at the management's discretion, be topped to approximately twenty- thirty feet in height and the trunks left in place for wildlife,. This may result in cost savings where trees can be climbed. However, all ash trees should be removed entirely and without climbing due to their brittle nature and tendency to fail during removal operations. Contractors performing the work should be familiar with "ash snap" and the specialized removal procedures this creates. Two trees behind the units along Ridge Ford will likely need to be felled to the ground as they have been dead for some time and may not be able to be climbed safely.

Wood and brush from the removals may remain on site so long as it is cut to lay flat on the forest floor to reduce the potential for forest fire during drought conditions. This will significantly reduce the costs associated with the removals as access for trucks and equipment is limited near many of the removals.

Please note, a number of these trees are within the 100 ft. RPA buffer within the stream valley. This report should be forwarded to Fairfax County Forest Conservation Branch for approval for the removals. The county may request replacement trees for trees that need to be removed. Please let me know if you would like me to contact and review these removals with them. I would try to negotiate treatment of invasives over the planting of trees in the stream valley, as this is a higher priority than replanting at this time. There is now a tab in the PLUS system for applications of this type.

Tree number 745, previously numbered 201, the sugar maple near the community entrance has been added to the removal list again. As we discussed there are some questions as to the ownership and responsibility for this tree. Its condition has worsened due to decay. Somehow, this tree should get removed as it is one of the worst conditions I observed regarding high risk to people and property.

Oaks near the swimming pool complex

I recommend the group of oaks near the pool get regular treatment as previously prescribed and be treated as one area rather than individual trees. Their treatment should occur every year or at a minimum, every other year. Treatment should include pruning to remove deadwood only, mulching, light fertilization with a bio-stimulant, and a systemic insect preventative. These trees are a dominant and important component of the landscape. They are under significant stress caused by the extensive use of the area. These treatments will help to prevent stress and reduce the potential for them to decline.

Mulching is particularly important and should be replenished every year. It should be installed at a depth of 4"-5" and maintained at this depth to provide the maximum benefit.. Mulching will provide many benefits for these trees including:

1. Reducing soil erosion and compaction
2. Providing nutrient recycling and increased organic matter
3. Improving the soil structure and fertility
4. Reducing drought stress and conserving soil moisture
5. Preventing erosion

While the mulch covering the previously mulched areas is good, expanding the mulch over any bare areas is also recommended. (It is unlikely turf will ever be successful due to the high traffic and shade from the trees.) As stated in prior reports, these trees are some of the most important in the community and warrant this type of investment to continue to improve their health and vigor.

Pruning of these trees should only be performed to remove deadwood 1.5” or larger. The removal of any live branches, epicormic sprouts, or other living tissue should be avoided unless there is a defect that creates a safety risk to the users of the area. Please contact me if any contractors suggest more significant pruning than just deadwood so that we can discuss.

Budgets

I anticipate the following budgets for the work recommended. This is organized by task.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Budget Amount \$</u>
Removals	\$17,500.00
Mulching (Pool)	\$3,500.00
Fertilization and systemic(pool)	\$2,500.00
Pruning (pool)	\$2,700.00
Total	\$26,200.00

These budgets are based on my experience and familiarity with the work recommended. There may be substantial variation in costs associated with tree care. The specifications provided should help to reduce this variation. Actual costs may vary but should not exceed these budgets. I am available to help secure contractors for this work as necessary and to review the work to make certain it is completed as specified.

Additional Discussion

Forested stream valley (Recommendations remain from 2023)

The overall condition of the stream valley area has not changed substantially since the prior reviews. The exotic and invasive species continue to spread, especially within areas where canopy density is reduced. The priority within this area in general is to begin addressing exotic and invasive species. If budgets allow, it is highly recommended to begin addressing this.

I did not observe any other significant pest problems throughout the forest except for emerald ash borer. It is the reason tree several ash trees have been recommended for removal. There are not many ash trees remaining in the forest. This problem will continue until they are no longer present in the forest community. There is no efficient way to prevent this in the context of these forests.

The dumping of yard debris throughout the stream valley and adjacent to the trails continues to be an issue. This activity should be stopped as it is a source of introducing additional exotic and invasive species into the areas.

Following are my recommendations regarding the overall treatment of the stream valley ecosystem.

Stream Erosion

The conditions of the stream erosion do not appear to be any worse than in prior years. It remains problematic, but not any more severe than in the past review. It remains an issue that should be addressed as timing and budgets allow. Previous recommendations remain current as follows:

It is obvious from the amount of erosion that this has been occurring for some time and is an ongoing problem. The treatment of the specific sections and issues remains beyond the scope of this report. I recommend the community contact the Northern Virginia Soil Conservation District (NVSCD) as a first step in addressing the erosion issues. This recommendation is carried over from prior reports and may be beyond the budget wherewithal of the community at this time. However, if opportunity arises, i.e. natural cycle of oak decline abates, this should become a primary item in the budgets.

I am hopeful the NVSCD can help direct the community toward resources that approach the reduction of erosion and undermining of trees in a natural manner by selecting a consultant that matches the techniques to level of erosion specific to this area. I encourage the community to select consultants and contractors that do not resort to extensive tree clearing and massive stone works for reducing erosion, as these, in my opinion, tend to cause a high degree of forest degradation and create additional maintenance issues following restoration.

Emerald ash borer

Emerald ash borer remains the primary cause for the death and removal of ash trees in the stream valley. It appears to be working its course. As the ash are removed, this should not be an issue in coming years. As predicted, the death of ash trees has continued to appoint where many ash trees have been removed, at least from positions where they represent a significant risk. Five ash trees are included for removal in this review. There are not many ash trees remaining in the forest. This problem will continue until they are no longer present in the forest community. There is no efficient

way to prevent this in the context of these forests. We will continue to identify declining ash trees and recommend removal as necessary. (Tree # 754, behind 9006 Brooks Ford Rd is recommended for removal due to EAB and associated decline.)

Oak Decline

Seven of the trees recommended for removal in this review are white oak trees in the stream valley and behind the Ridge Ford Rd. units. This is a result of oak decline syndrome, a condition where mature oaks decline for no easily or singularly identifiable reason. Due to this, there are no treatment recommendations or protocols for declining oaks in natural areas. This condition is reported to be a cyclical pattern that has been observed over the history of the oak forests, especially in the southeast. There is some discussion in the literature about this being related to climate change and warming trends. It is not predictable as to how long this trend may continue or when it might abate. I have several clients that have much more severe problems with oak tree death than this. We should continue to observe and see what type of mortality we have in the future. I also check the literature frequently for updates on any research as to the cause and potential treatments, there is nothing new at this time. However, my personal observations suggest this problem may be waning in the Northern Virginia area.

Exotic and invasive species

Exotic invasive species include multi-flora rose, Korean mustard, Japanese stilt grass, vine honeysuckle porcelain berry, princess tree and others. The levels are consistent with my last review. Most of the invasive species occur in pockets where past disturbance was evident. At a minimum, the vines that are climbing trees should be cut at the base, so they do not affect the health of the trees.

It is not cost effective or affordable for a community to try to treat these on a wholesale basis across the site. One of the most effective ways for a community to treat these is to request that tree contractors remove any vines from trees in the vicinity of their work as they are performing removals. I have seen communities mobilize volunteers to perform hand removal of large areas. Herbicide treatments should be considered following hand removal and be performed by a Certified Pesticide Applicator. There may be state level grants available to help with this problem. Please contact me if you would like to pursue the potential of grant programs to begin addressing these ongoing problems associated with invasive species.

These are the primary issues I observed regarding the forests and trees at Burke Station Square in 2023. By far, the most significant and important to address is the removal of trees that pose a risk to residents and their property. An annual reassessment is recommended to continue to address the removal of ash trees, additional trees that die, maintenance of the oak grove, and other issues that might arise.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding the information provided.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Zimar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Don" and last name "Zimar" clearly distinguishable.

Donald E. Zimar
Registered Consulting Arborist

Attachments:

Burke Station Square Recommended Work Listing 2024.PDF
Burke Station Square Tree Locations 2024 GE.pdf
Burke Station Square Specifications 2024.PDF

