

August 28, 2023

While the tree damage caused by last month's storm brought attention to the trees on the Close, All Hallows Guild has supported the care and maintenance of trees from the earliest days of the Cathedral. In 1929, Florence Bratenahl wrote in *A Cathedral's Hillside and Its Gardens* that "Much of our work, though absolutely necessary, was not within the range of observation—the general care of trees, that wonderful native growth of giant oaks." Recognizing the importance of tree maintenance, All Hallows Guild supports the annual pruning and maintenance of trees as part of its annual budget– typically over $50,000. In FY 2023, due to the loss of several large trees, All Hallows Guild paid over $70,000 in tree maintenance and removal. The cost of this summer's storm is still unknown.

In 2019, All Hallows Guild commissioned a restoration consultant to assess the

woodland and make recommendations to restore the watershed and ecological health of the Olmsted Woods, as well as the 26-acre watershed area of which it is a part. As part of the study, Morris Arboretum conducted an in-depth tree survey of all trees with a diameter over 12” in Olmsted Woods. Certified arborists inspected 234 trees, assessed their health, and tagged them with each tree’s unique inventory number. In addition, Morris recorded tree locations and produced a geo-referenced map of the trees in the scope area. The Guild and staff will be able to update the survey so the information continues to be meaningful.

The Close lost a number of other significant trees in the past few years, including several large white oaks in the woods, a copper beech along the edge of Bishop’s Garden and two white oaks and a yellowwood in the Apse area. The Horticulture staff is working with the AHG Garden Committee to prepare conceptual plans for replanting these areas.


EXIT

The Apse without the White Oak Trees



The area south of the Bishop's Garden, after the loss of the Copper Beech tree

Despite all the care that has gone into the trees and the Woods, the July 29 storm caused substantial damage. Professional tree experts removed the necessary trees with the Horticulture staff closing the woods for several weeks while they remove debris and ensure no additional limbs will fall. The clearing work will continue for many months and only afterward can replanting begin; total costs will be very high and cannot yet be determined.



Photograph by Virginia Egan

Large tree fallen in the ravine – fortunately no damage was done to neighboring trees.



Photograph by Virginia Egan

This area at the base of the steps leading from the George Washington Statue once was the home of lovely native plants – Pokeweed, Jumpseed, and White Snakeroot.



Photograph by Virginia Egan

The Twin Oaks area, where the woods volunteers have been pulling ivy, lost one of the “twins”.



Photograph by Virginia Egan

Damaged bench and woods in Olmsted Woods