Since 2013, a dramatic die-off of sword ferns (*Polystichum munitum*) at Seward Park has puzzled researchers. Excessive mountain beaver (*Aplodontia rufa*) herbivory was originally a suspect (among other possible culprits such as a plant pathogen or nutrient imbalance). These rodents rely heavily on *P. munitum* fronds both for consumption or nesting. A lack of top carnivores at the park justified a study into herbivory rates, as their absence has been proven to account for significant top-down effects in terrestrial ecosystems, sometimes resulting in a trophic cascade. It must be noted that *A. rufa* is not now thought to be a primary cause of the die-off, though could still be proven as a relevant stress factor. To observe sword fern herbivory rates in the die-off zone, I constructed four chicken wire based exclosure structures to prevent herbivory on certain ferns. Unprotected, control plots of equal size mirrored three of these structures. This allowed for a compare and contrast of fern health and frond loss over time. Survey results did not conclusively show herbivory rates to be concerning. However, the study needs several years at the least, rather than a sole season, to gather meaningful data. The study was an attempt, in part, to exercise place-based methods. Place-based methodologies emphasize local natural history, system-specific knowledge, and are built on patient, in-person field observations. When properly defined, distinguished and conducted, place-based methodologies hold significant scientific and social value, and can be particularly useful for environmental research in urban forests.