

MUTTFLAND MEADOWS PROPERTY MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

The purpose of these guidelines is to support the Board's commitment, per the bylaws, to maintaining Muttland Meadows as a clean, natural, scenic, and attractive environment. Our goal is to preserve native plants, trees, and natural features for the benefit of current visitors and future generations. These standards apply consistently, whether maintenance is performed by volunteers, board members, or contracted services.

I. GRASS CUTTING

A. When to Begin

1. Cutting should begin after Memorial Day, to allow spring grasses to seed properly and to align with "No Mow May" principles.
2. In years when unusual weather (for example, heavy spring rain) causes excessive growth before Memorial Day, cutting may begin earlier with Board officer approval.

B. Frequency and Height

1. Cutting frequency may vary with weather and growth, but should average about every two weeks.
2. Grass should be cut when it reaches 6 inches in height.
3. Mower height shall be set at 4 inches, so that no more than half of the vegetation height is removed at one time.
4. These standards allow flexibility for seasonal variation (e.g., slow growth in August).

C. Main Areas to be Cut

1. Large area at the top, west of the central path, from the center upper poop station to the center lower poop station.
2. The large area down below, east of the central path, between the path and the wetland tree line.
3. Two smaller areas (described below) - can be cut depending on cost.
 - a. Small area east of the path at the bottom of the hill.
 - b. Small area west of the path at the north corner, by the willow and black walnut trees.

D. Areas NOT to be Cut

1. The top grassy area with trees in the south corner which are suitable for native plantings and shrub relocation.
2. East side of the central path at the top of the hill (wooded stretch) which has sparse grass, is heavily shaded, and is ideal for planting shade-tolerant species.
3. Any area with multiple trees functioning as a small wooded area (generally where open space is less than about 20 feet across).
4. A buffer of 3 feet shall be maintained between cutting and all tree lines and fence lines, especially along the wetland edge.
5. Any areas containing multiple trees function as small wooded zones and should remain undisturbed.

E. When to Stop Cutting for Fall/Winter

Cutting shall taper off as growth slows toward fall. The decision on when to stop cutting for the season shall be based on weather and growth conditions, using the same principles as the start-of-season guidelines.

2. LANDSCAPING

A. Preserve Existing Vegetation

1. Preserve and embrace non-invasive plants and trees already present on the Property.
2. No removal unless necessary for safety, or unless classified as a noxious weed (outside of wetland).

B. Native Plantings

1. Plant native plants and trees to maintain and replenish a natural, attractive Park.

C. Designated Planting Areas

1. Establish and use designated areas that are not cut, especially along paths and walkways, for new plantings.
2. Favor donated or low-cost plants whenever possible.

D. Remediation and Rain Gardens

With help from qualified professionals, create remediation plans for planting rain Gardens where needed (such as the detention pond area) to help prevent runoff and flooding.

E. Weed Control

1. Pet-safe weed control products may be used to control noxious plants, except in the wetland area.
2. Other invasive plants e.g. Queen Anne's lace, garlic mustard, and other invasives may be removed if desired, but naturalized plants that are not harmful may remain.

F. Mulch and Traffic Bond

1. Mulch and traffic-bond should be used only on existing designated walkways, not in grass or planting areas.
2. Deliveries should be monitored when possible to avoid dumping material in non-designated areas.

3. WETLAND PROTECTION

A. General Protection

1. Maintain the natural wetland on our property by preserving the existing vegetation and avoiding disturbing the land.

B. Cutting and Pruning

1. No landscaping, soil disturbance, machinery, or digging is allowed in the Wetland.
2. Cut and prune vegetation by hand above the ground surface only, without disturbing the soil.

C. Roots and Stumps

1. Removing any below-ground stumps or roots is prohibited by the DNR.

D. Machinery

1. Do not use machinery to clear trees, shrubs, or other vegetation from the wetland.
2. No motorized vehicles or machinery of any kind (tractors, ATVs, skid steers) must not enter the wetland.
3. Past use of equipment has caused damage and must not be repeated.

E. Invasive Plant Removal

1. Removing non-native weeds and invasive plants in the wetland may be done above the ground only by hand.

F. Planting at Wetland Edge

1. Planting native plants around the edge of the wetland may be done to act as a filter for runoff and to help prevent erosion.

G. WETLAND SIGNAGE

1. Wetland signs shall read: "Natural Wetland – Do Not Disturb."
2. Three Posts shall be installed: one at each end of the wetland boundary and one in the middle open area west of tree line.
3. Signs may be mounted on high-visibility posts (e.g., yellow) along the wetland boundary, as marked in the field.
4. A GPS walk-through will be completed to mark exact wetland borders before Installation.

4. ADDITIONAL NOTES

1. Long-standing drainage issues may be tied to village-installed sewer pipes blocked by willow tree roots. Further exploration may be needed with the Village.
2. Parking lot runoff remains a major contributor to erosion; future improvements should address pitch and flow direction.
3. Volunteers should walk the property before spring cleanup to identify weed control needs.
4. Community education continues to be important especially regarding pet waste pickup.

5. LARGE-SCALE PLANNING/ LONG-TERM VISION

- A long-range landscape strategy should be developed, especially regarding:
- Parking lot regrading or resurfacing
- Rain gardens
- Runoff management
- Solar lighting expansion
- Grants may be pursued for:
- Native plantings
- Parking lot improvements
- Solar light expansion
- These projects allow progression without using existing operating funds.

