

No-Mow Policy

In an effort to maximize the aesthetics of our city's natural areas and trail corridors, the following policy was written in 2010 and revised in 2016 & 2018.



POLICY

The City of Greeley Culture, Parks and Recreation Department, Parks Division, has a “No-Mow” policy for areas within the city that are designed native grass landscapes, designated natural areas and trails, and undeveloped city-owned properties. These are places of special interest and uses that are much different from neighborhood park settings. These areas are much more passive and accommodate low-impact uses. Natural areas are managed to maintain and strengthen native grass and wildflower species, with the primary goal being the health of native vegetation, which, in turn, helps to reduce the occurrence of weeds. The focus is on enriching habitats through diverse cover of native species and management of designated noxious weeds. Noxious weeds will be managed and eradicated wherever possible by mechanical, chemical and natural means.

WHY “NO-MOW?”

A natural area is non-irrigated land that receives water only from rain and snow – it is an area that would exist in nature if left undisturbed by human activities. We enjoy many benefits from healthy, native vegetation, and no-mow maintenance is critical for the proper management of a natural area. Native grasses will increase in height and health and ultimately suppress weed growth if left unmown or mowed at a taller height when mowing cannot be avoided.

Greeley’s No-Mow Policy is similar to policies that nearby cities have enacted. Through public education, these policies have gained support by local citizens.

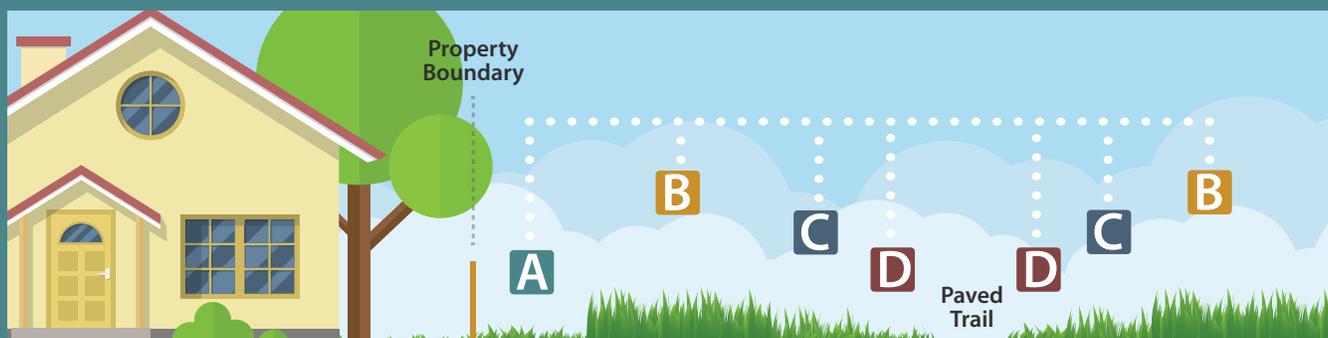
BENEFITS

- Native grasses regenerate naturally by propagating their own seed.
- Native grasses support wildlife by providing food and cover.
- Native grasses help promote the return of other native plant and animal species.
- Native grasses help filter storm water run-off.
- No-Mow management improves air quality through reduced spent-fuel emissions.
- When allowed to grow to natural height, native grasses reduce non-native weed growth.
- There is reduced chemical impact on the environment due to elimination of fertilizer use and fewer weeds.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

No-mow management is an effective use of tax funds as it extends the life of equipment used in these areas, reduces fuel usage and allows staff hours to be allocated for other necessary maintenance tasks that would otherwise be spent on mowing.

Maintenance Guidelines



A A courtesy cut may be warranted up to 3 times each year no shorter than 6-8” in height.

B No-mow area to preserve natural area

C Tiered trail cut to 8-12” high and roughly 3’ in width maximum

D Tiered trail cut to 6-8” high and roughly 3’ in width maximum

TARGETED MOWING

- 6' maximum width, 6-12" high on each side of a concrete or soft-surface trail up to 3 times per growing season, May 15th through September 15th.
- 15' maximum width, 6-8" high, along the property line, if feasible and accessible, where a designated natural area abuts residential/commercial property up to 3 times per growing season, May 15th through September 15th.

WEED CONTROL

- Weed management will be on an as-needed basis to control noxious weeds designated on the Colorado Noxious Weed List A of "must eradicate" weeds, Lists B & C for "designated management," as well as the "watch list" weeds.
- Weed management strategies will be determined by the site and conditions and may consist of mechanical, biological and/or chemical control methods, based on State requirements.

MOWING, MAINTENANCE AND WEED MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES WILL BE EVALUATED ON A SITE-BY-SITE BASIS AND ARE INFLUENCED BY WEATHER CONDITIONS AND HEALTH OF THE NATIVE VEGETATION.

TRAIL CORRIDORS

- Broadview Acres (#3 Ditch Trail)
- Firefly Nature Trail (McCloskey NA)
- Fox Run
- Hwy 34 Bike Path
- Larson
- Mountain Vista (2019 construction)
- Owl Ridge
- Poudre
- Sheep Draw
- Signature Bluffs Nature Trail

DESIGNATED NATURAL AREAS

- 1st Avenue Pond (closed to public)
- Boomerang Ranch
- Cottonwood Bend
- Country Club West
- East Memorial
- Glenmere Urban Wildlife Sanctuary
- Gateway Lakes
- Hunters Cove
- Josephine B Jones
- McCloskey
- Mountain Shadows
- Mountain Vista
- Pumpkin Ridge
- Sheep Draw
- Signature Bluffs

OTHER NATURALLY MANAGED CITY PROPERTY

- 20th Street Detention/spillways between 71st Avenue and 77th Avenue
- 20th Street Medians/Parkways (71st Avenue to 82nd Avenue)
- 65th Avenue Medians/Parkways (Hwy 34 to 32nd St)
- Eagle View Detention
- Gallery Green
- Greeley West Park (portion)
- Homestead Park
- Northridge Estates (future park/natural area)
- Peakview Park (portion)
- Ramseier Farm Park (portion)
- Weber West Detention
- Woodbriar Park
- Youth Sports Complex (portion)

MYTH OR FACT

Tall grasses in drainage areas prevent water from flowing downstream.

In actuality, these grasses do slow down water movement. But, that is a good thing. Slowing the movement of water reduces erosion and, thereby, sedimentation of streams, ponds, and rivers. Slowing the runoff allows the moisture to seep into the ground for the benefit of the vegetation and helps to recharge groundwater. This process also allows potential pollutants to be filtered out before the storm water reaches the stream, creek, river, or pond.

Tall grasses are a fire hazard. They need to be mowed to prevent a fire.

While these grasses, when dry, could be subject to a wildland fire, mowing them does not remove the fuel load. Instead of being tall, they are concentrated on the ground which may result in a hotter fire. Dale Lyman, formerly Greeley's Fire Marshall and now, Fire Chief, stated, "Mowing the grass alone wouldn't make a significant risk reduction, in that the fuel would still be there. I recommend that homeowners ensure that they maintain a "defensible space" between the fuel load in the field and their homes. This will most likely already be there if they have a bluegrass lawn in that area." If you are concerned about the potential for damage to your property, your best defense is to maintain your lawn. If there are trees or shrubs adjacent to the natural area and close to structures you might consider removing them. It should also be noted that tall, non-dormant native grasses act as a "water reservoir" and actually provide a level of defense against a stronger-intensity wildfire.

For questions, contact:

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