



**Lincoln Parks & Recreation**

# **Best Management Practices for Grasses and Turf Areas**

Adopted by Parks and Recreation Advisory Board April, 2009; Revised March 2011



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## **LINCOLN PARKS & RECREATION RESOURCES:**

The Parks Division of Lincoln Parks and Recreation is the section that provides maintenance and upkeep of 128 miles of trails, 125 parks, gardens, plazas, malls, medians and conservancy areas covering nearly 5,200 acres, nine outdoor pools, six recreation centers, two dog runs, and over 123,000 city trees in Lincoln.

The Parks Division is committed to the maintenance and mowing of the parks in an efficient and effective manner utilizing the resources provided through the budgeting process; from this point forward to be referred to as Best Management Practices or BMPs. These BMPs are a tool to be used by personnel to establish base levels of maintenance for the various turf grass sites. It is also a tool to help address any concerns the public may have.

The purpose of this document is to detail each distinct area of turf grass, their uses and the maintenance for each distinct area. The distinct area in which a memorial (such as, but not limited to, a tree, plaque or bench) resides, will be maintained as that distinct area is currently identified. No additional mowing or trimming will be performed.

Five distinct areas have been identified:

- **PARK TURF AREAS**
- **ATHLETIC FIELDS**
- **GARDENS, PLAZAS, MALLS**
- **CONSERVANCY AREAS**
- **LAKES, PONDS CREEKS, STREAMS, AND DRAINAGE WAYS**

### **PARK TURF AREAS**

Types of use include: general park areas, medians.

These areas require regular mowing on a 14 calendar day rotation, at a height of 2½” to 3”. These areas generally do not receive fertilizer and receive a limited amount of weed control in the fall of each year. Park areas are typically seeded with a turf type tall fescue/bluegrass blend. Current median areas are seeded with Buffalograss, and require less mowing, while older medians are seeded with a turf type tall fescue/bluegrass blend. Wood chip mulch is placed around deciduous trees to reduce line trimming and protect the tree trunks from mower blight. Chemical mowing may also be used to reduce line trimming around trees, along curb lines, on parking lots and sidewalks/trails.

### **ATHLETIC FIELDS**

Types of use include: athletic fields, including baseball, softball and soccer fields.

These areas require mowing two to three times per week, at a height of 2” to 2½”, or as dictated by growing conditions. These receive applications of fertilizer and are irrigated to maintain a healthy, safe playing surface. Soil tests are used to determine field fertility requirements, with products selected to meet those fertility needs, having extended release characteristics, and little or no Phosphorus (3% or less.) Applications of pesticides are made preventatively (pre-emergent, grub and fungus control) and curatively when needed. Post emergent weed control is made in the fall of the year. These areas are typically seeded with a bluegrass/rye blend.

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## **GARDENS, PLAZAS & MALLS**

Types of use include: Sunken Gardens, Hamann Rose Garden, Rotary Strolling Garden, Lincoln Mall, Pioneers Park Columns, Hazel Abel Park, Government Square.

These are high visibility areas, often used for weddings or special functions that require well manicured turf. Mowing occurs on a weekly basis at a height of 2½” to 4” or as dictated by growing conditions. Applications of fertilizer and irrigation are made to maintain a healthy turf. Pesticide applications are made preventatively (pre-emergent, grub and fungus control) and curatively when needed. Post emergent weed control is made in the fall of each year. These are typically seeded/sodded with a turf type tall fescue/bluegrass blend.

## **CONSERVANCY AREAS**

Types of use include: low maintenance areas like Wilderness Park, Burns Park, Warner Wetlands, Northern Lights Greenbelt, and designated low maintenance long grass areas in neighborhood, community and regional parks.

These areas typically receive one to three mowings per year or less, depending on species composition, management goals, and woody plant invasion. Prescribed burning may be used every two to three years to achieve management goals at particular locations. Conservancy areas are typically made up of existing plant species and may be seeded to warm season grasses and wild flowers. Designated long grass areas are made up of existing plant species, generally a turf type tall fescue/bluegrass blend or a bluegrass/rye blend, but can be seeded to a warm season grass/wild flower blend. Weed control, in these areas, is made through spot treatment

applications either mechanically or chemically. Large area infestations may require broadcast applications of herbicides in the fall of the year.

## **LAKES, PONDS, CREEKS, STREAMS, AND DRAINAGE WAYS**

Types of use include: buffer zones around lakes and ponds and along creeks, streams and drainage ways to improve water quality and reduce erosion.

These long grass areas typically receive one mowing per year in the spring, depending on location, species composition, management goals, and woody plant invasion. These areas consist of existing grass species and may be seeded with deep rooting species for bank stabilization and erosion control. Prairie grasses and wild flower blends may be considered as a seeding alternative. Buffer zone width is typically 30’ but may vary due to the severity of the slope and erosion and management goals. All Groundwater Guardian Green Sites will be designated, posted and maintained to reduce erosion of the banks surrounding a given location and to improve the water quality before it leaves said location by reducing the influx of fertilizer, salts, pet excrement, and silt from the surrounding areas into the stream tributaries.

## **NOXIOUS WEEDS**

Noxious weeds, as identified by the State of Nebraska, when found on park land, will be controlled through approved methods, including mechanical and chemical means.

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