



# Appendix H: Vegetation Management – Dryland Mowing

Standard Operating Procedure

**1. Purpose:**

1.1. To define standards for mowing dryland areas on City owned property.

**2. Scope**

2.1. These standards will apply to all non-irrigated and minimally irrigated dryland grass areas that occur on parks, greenways, right-of-ways, and open spaces.

**3. Overview:**

3.1. When managed properly, dryland grasses provide the following benefits:

- Help prevent infestations of weeds
- Reduce the use of water
- Provide habitat for wildlife
- Stabilize stream and irrigation ditch banks
- Slow storm water run-off and filter sediment and nutrient loads
- Prevent social trails and widening of crusher fines trails
- Add scenic value to the landscape

**4. Equipment:**

4.1. Mowing shall be conducted primarily by riding mowers with six (6) foot wide decks that can be raised to a maximum of four (4) inches. Ideal mowing heights for dryland areas is between 5 to 8 inches. As mowers are replaced, mowers with decks that can be raised more than four (4) inches should be pursued. If mowers with decks that can be raised more than four (4) inches are purchased, standards should be adjusted to taller minimum mowing heights.

**5. Definitions:**

5.1. Dryland – Areas consisting of native grasses or non-native pasture grasses that do not need supplemental water unless regularly mowed. Examples of grasses are blue grama, buffalograss, smooth brome, and crested wheatgrass.

5.2. No-mow Sites - Areas where grasses shall not be mowed except for prescribed weed control. Such sites are located:

- In open areas away from trails that are meant to serve as habitat for

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wildlife.

- Along crusher fines wider than two (2) feet or dirt trails.
- Along trail corridors where bank stabilization is crucial. Sites where bank stabilization is the primary goal occur where there is less than three (3) feet between the edge of a trail and the top edge of a bank.

- 5.3. Residential Greenways - Greenways with adjacent residential development such as the Oligarchy and Rough-and-Ready Greenways. They have an eight (8) foot wide concrete trail that runs parallel to a waterway.
- 5.4. Trail Side Urban Interface – The area within a Residential Greenway between the trail and the edge of residential development.
- 5.5. Non-Trail Side Urban Interface – The mowed area within a Residential Greenway adjacent to residential development on the side of the waterway where there is no trail.
- 5.6. Natural Area – The area within a Residential Greenway between the Trail Side and Non-Trail Urban Interfaces.
- 5.7. Non-Residential Greenway - Greenways where there is no adjacent residential development such as sections of the St. Vrain and Left Hand Greenways. They are either 8 or 10 foot wide concrete paths sometimes with an adjacent crusher fines path.
- 5.8. Use Areas - Areas that are used for picnics, campgrounds, storage, entry ways, and special events.
- 5.9. Seeded Areas - Degraded lands seeded to establish perennial grasses.
- 5.10. Road Right-of-Way – The areas immediately adjacent to and within a road which the City is responsible for maintaining.

**6. Procedure:**

6.1. No Mow Sites

- 6.1.1. Apply herbicide as prescribed to weeds not effectively controlled by mechanical means such as perennials, kochia, and cheatgrass along trail edges.
- 6.1.2. Mow or weed whip only for prescribed weed control at a minimum height of four (4) inches.

6.2. Residential Greenways

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6.2.1. Trail Side Urban Interface

6.2.1.1. When grasses grow to a height of five (5) inches, evaluate and if needed, mow to a minimum height of four (4) inches from the edge of the trail to the edge of the residential development where accessible.

6.2.1.2. Apply herbicide as prescribed to weeds not effectively controlled by mechanical means such as perennials, kochia, and cheatgrass.

6.2.2. Non-Trail Side Urban Interface

6.2.2.1. When grasses grow to a height of five (5) inches, evaluate and if needed, mow to a minimum height of four (4) inches and between six (6) to twelve (12) feet immediately adjacent to the edge of the residential development where accessible.

6.2.2.2. Apply herbicide as prescribed to weeds not effectively controlled by mechanical means such as perennials, kochia, and cheatgrass.

6.2.3. Natural Area

6.2.3.1. When grasses grow to a height of eight (8) inches, evaluate and if needed, mow to a minimum height of four (4) inches and maximum width of six (6) feet from the edge of the trail nearest the waterway.

6.2.3.2. Do not mow or weed whip around shrub beds, tree wells, or signs.

6.2.3.3. Weed whip at a minimum height of four (4) inches and maximum width of one (1) foot around benches, picnic tables, and shelters and in front of garbage cans.

6.2.3.4. Weedwhip a path from a trail to a bench, picnic table, or shelter at a height of four (4) inches and a maximum width of six (6) feet.

6.2.3.5. Apply herbicide as prescribed to weeds not effectively controlled by mechanical means such as perennials, kochia, and cheatgrass.

6.3. Non-Residential Greenways

6.3.1. Eight (8) or Ten (10) Foot Concrete Trails

6.3.1.1. When grasses grow to a height of eight (8) inches, evaluate and if needed, mow to a minimum height of four (4) inches and a maximum width of two (2) feet from both edges of the trail.

6.3.1.2. Do not mow around shrub beds, tree wells, garbage cans, benches, signs, or any other structure.

6.3.1.3. Weed whip at a minimum height of four (4) inches and maximum width of one (1) foot around benches, picnic tables, and shelters and in front of garbage cans.

6.3.1.4. Weedwhip a path from a trail to a bench, picnic table, or shelter at a height of four (4) inches and a maximum width of six (6) feet.

6.3.1.5. Mowing shall cease to allow for recovery beginning in September until grasses are dormant and no longer have any green leaf surface.

6.3.1.5..1. Mow to a minimum height of four (4) inches and a maximum

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width of six (6) feet from both edges of the trail once grasses are dormant and no longer have any green leaf surface remaining.

6.3.1.6. Do not spray non-selective herbicides around sign posts, garbage cans, benches, or any other structure.

6.3.1.7. Apply herbicide as prescribed to weeds not effectively controlled by mechanical means such as perennials, kochia, and cheatgrass.

6.4. Use Areas

6.4.1. When grasses grow to height of five (5) inches, evaluate and if needed, mow to a minimum height of four (4) inches.

6.4.2. Apply herbicide as prescribed to weeds not effectively controlled by mechanical means such as perennials, kochia, and cheatgrass.

6.4.3. Mow specified areas as needed for special events to a minimum height of four (4) inches one week prior to the event. Examples of special events include Memorial Day at Jim Hamm Pond and Rhythm on the River at Roger’s Grove.

6.4.3.1. Approval by Parks Supervisor and Natural Resources Specialist is required for any special event mowing request.

6.5. Seeded Areas

Degraded lands seeded to establish perennial grasses.

6.5.1. During the first and second years after seeding, mow weeds just before seed formation to a minimum height of six (6) inches or just above the height of seeded grasses until grasses are established.

6.5.2. After the second year after seeding, apply herbicides as prescribed to weeds growing in the seeded area.

6.5.2.1. Once seeded grasses have been determined to be established, follow the standards of Section 6 of this document for the respective area that was seeded.

6.6. Road Right-of-Way

6.6.1. Side of Road

6.6.1.1. When grasses grow to a height of five (5) inches, evaluate and if needed, mow to a minimum height of four (4) inches and to the edge of the sidewalk or a maximum width of 12 feet if no sidewalk is present.

6.6.2. Median

6.6.2.1. When grasses grow to a height of eight (8) inches, evaluate and if needed, mow entire median to a minimum height of four (4) inches.

6.7 Evaluation Criteria

Due to the dynamic nature of vegetation growth in relation to weather conditions, scheduling regular mowing is not possible. Dryland areas will need to be evaluated

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periodically to determine the need for mowing as determined by Parks Supervisor and Natural Resources Specialist. Criteria to be evaluated to determine mowing needs include presence of weeds, priority of the area compared to others, location, time of year, and safety needs such as sight distance.

**7. Disclaimer:**

It is the intent of the City to follow all Dryland mowing guidelines whenever possible. Many conditions may arise to justify variations to these guidelines, to better promote plant health, provide specific weed control and to reestablish vegetation in native areas.

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