

Date Acknowledged: July 20, 2006

POLICY TITLE: Village Owned Natural Area Management Policy

POLICY STATEMENT:

A. Purpose:

It is the intent of this policy to provide guidance to the Village to consistently follow for the management of Village owned natural areas which will protect and preserve these land types and native plant species while restricting encroachment that may harm their intended purpose.

B. Definition:

Village owned properties that are set aside from development to be left in a natural state and to remain in an undisturbed condition with little or no actual maintenance. These areas include, but are not limited to, ESA's, green belts, stream corridors, wetlands, development conservancies, drainageways, and non-manicured park areas.

C. Maintenance and Usage:

It is the intent of the Village to allow all natural areas to remain in a "natural state" with no routine or actual maintenance by the Village or other individuals. "Natural state" shall mean that all vegetation shall grow unrestricted, die and decompose naturally, with soil and water resources to remain in an undisturbed condition.

All buildings, fencing, construction, improvements, filling or cutting of grade, and land maintenance shall be prohibited. In addition cutting and / or removal of vegetation; deposition of refuse, yard waste, debris, garbage; storage of materials and equipment; and operation of motorized vehicles shall be prohibited.

The Village, may access natural areas for the purpose of maintenance of utilities and drainageways or any other needs as it sees fit. Upon completion of any construction or intrusion the Village shall restore, as close as possible to original state, with native vegetations. In addition, the Village may install a network of recreation trails within any natural area in accordance with the Village of Howard Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Public usage of these areas is limited to passive, non-intrusive recreation only. Such uses would include hiking, wildlife, and nature viewing.

Hazard Vegetation:

The Village, upon the determination of the Village Forester, shall alleviate any hazard tree within a natural area. A “hazard” tree by definition shall have a defective part of the plant and shall have a “target” affected by the hazard. A defective tree or tree part is one that has the potential to fail. A target is defined as a person or object that may be injured or damaged if the tree, or part, failed. Alleviation of said hazard can include, but not limited to, cutting of tree, or part, to the ground, make safe, and allow to decompose naturally.

Diseased or insect infested trees and shrubs may be removed in accordance with policies set forth in the Village of Howard Arboricultural Specifications Manual and other Village Codes.

Invasive species, at the option of the Village, may be controlled and managed within natural areas to alleviate the invasive and restore to native vegetation.

D. Planting of Vegetation:

The Village does not actively plant vegetation (i.e. trees, shrubs, grasses, etc.) within natural areas with the exception of restoration following any construction activities. In addition, the Village does not encourage the planting of any vegetation by others within natural areas. All natural areas shall remain in a natural state with successional plant communities allowed to grow naturally.

E. Wildlife:

All wildlife, including but not limited to, birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects, shall be allowed to live naturally within any natural area. Molestation of animals, dens, nests, etc. is prohibited. In addition, the feeding or baiting of wildlife within natural areas is prohibited.

Any animal that is thought to be a nuisance should be brought to the attention of the Village Animal Humane Officer.

F. Penalties:

Prohibited activities requiring cleanup or restoration may be performed by the Village after two (2) weeks written notice to the party causing a prohibited activity specifying the corrective action necessary to cure that activity. All costs incurred by

the Village to cure, cleanup and restore any natural area harmed by said activity shall be charged to the party causing harm due to the prohibited activity.

Acknowledged this ____ day of _____, 2008.

Village Administrator

Executive Director