



Hoffman Estates Park District

Land Definition & Management Plan

November 2024

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Purpose

To define, identify and plan for the ground's management of Hoffman Estates Park District owned properties.

Overview

The Park District currently maintains over 800 acres of land, all of which has many different purposes and benefits. To identify sections of land according to their environmental purpose and residential use, the District has developed five types of properties. Every property will be classified under one for the following: Park, Greenway, Arboretum, Basin or Preserve.

1. Park – A property that contains developed recreational features including playgrounds, walking paths, athletic courts, and splash pad. Recreational features are not a part of the land management plan.
2. Greenway – Undeveloped land preserved for recreational use or environmental protection.
3. Arboretum – A property that is maintained by specializing in care of trees and botanical gardens.
4. Basin – Property that may retain or mitigate storm water.
5. Preserve - An area of land that is managed in order to conserve wildlife, plant habitat or other natural features. These are not native areas these are defined as natural areas.

Maintenance of park district properties is broken down into four categories:

1. Turfgrass Management
2. Natural Areas Management
3. Pond Management
4. Forestry Management

All of the properties owned by the Park District could have one or more of the management categories at one site based on its land usage and amenities. The following will explain each management category and how the Parks Department manages that category. When managing land use, there are many factors that are taken into consideration such as weather patterns, moisture content, accessibility, and safety, to name a few. All of these management plans will be managed at the discretion of the Parks District.

Turfgrass Management

The Hoffman Estates Park District owns and maintains roughly 250 acres of mowed turf-grass. Each site's maintenance plan is prioritized by type of use and location predetermined by the Park Services Division. These levels include varying mowing frequencies and heights, as well as varying degrees of fertilization and weed control. Not all properties are listed under Turfgrass Management as not all properties have turfgrass to be managed. The following levels set the standards for each site.

Level I

- Sites with the highest priority due to frequency and types of use including athletic fields and highly developed parks and amenities.
- Turf will be mowed 1-2x per week at varying heights from 2"- 4" from May through October.
- Fertilization and aerification will take place at a minimum of one application each spring but may be more frequent on specific athletic fields due to use and priority.
- Broadleaf weed control will take place at a minimum of one application each fall, but also may be more frequent based on specific site needs.
- Irrigation will take place when necessary based off of weather conditions and site usage.

Level II

- Sites with mid-level priority based on types of use and location including properties with minimal amenities and infrequent use.
- Turf will be mowed once per week at a minimum height of 3" and a maximum height of 4.5" from May through October.
- Fertilization will take place, if necessary, in order to maintain quality turfgrass once per year.
- Broadleaf weed control, when necessary will take place once per year in the fall. Spot applications if necessary, can take place based on weather.

Level III

- Sites with lower priority due to location, site restrictions and usage. These properties include basins, greenways, and preserves.
- Turf will be mowed on an as needed basis at varying heights from May through October. This is dependent upon weather patterns.
- Fertilization and broadleaf weed control will be applied on an as needed basis under the discretion of the Park Services Division.

Level IV

- Sites with the lowest priority due to locations, site restriction and usable space. These properties include basins and preserves.
- These sites will receive maintenance one to two times per year in the form of mowing or burning of natural areas.
- The majority of these sites are no mow areas or preserves with minimal maintained turf. If any turf is maintained, it is a small buffer of sidewalk area.
- Sites do not receive fertilizations and broadleaf control will be applied on as needed basis under the discretion of the Parks Service Division.

Natural Areas Management

Many of the properties owned by the Hoffman Estates Park District contain sections that are “naturalized areas.” These areas are comprised of one or more types of natural areas, wetland, woodland or prairie. A natural area is defined by the National Park Service as, “*an area that visually exhibits primarily nonhuman created qualities, such as an urban forest or wetland.*” Natural Area is an undisturbed area of land or water with a naturally occurring ecosystem which can include native and non-native species.

Though sometimes small in area, natural areas often become valuable assets. Most of the Hoffman Estates Park District’s natural areas are well defined, though some could be designated as recovering natural areas. The deep roots of native plants aid in stabilizing shorelines and prevent fertilizer runoff, keeping the ponds free of silt and algae. Natural areas that border bodies of water are to be maintained to provide water quality and a solid ecosystem.

Restoration is the word most often associated with a management plan for natural areas. Properly restored and managed natural areas result in a diversity of plants that possess unique characteristics and aesthetic appeal. While native plants are great for natural areas, they are not the only species that will grow in a natural area.

The district utilizes four methods to maintain our natural areas in the district. To determine what method of maintenance is completed, district staff members monitor our natural areas throughout the year. Types of plants and grasses, moisture content, and terrain determine which management method is used. All sites are site specific and could have one or up to all four maintenance methods completed in one year based on evaluations.

1. Prescribed Burning

Fire is the most effective and efficient way to manage invasive species and native flora within naturalized landscapes. Prescribed burning is a planned process undertaken by the District or contractual partners that happens between the months of October through May. Permits are obtained and notification is given to residents four weeks prior to projected burns each fall. All prescribed burns are carried out by trained and licensed personnel.

2. Mechanical

Where prescribed burning may not be an option, sites may be mowed or cleared using mechanical mechanisms. This could include brush cutting, timber clearing and/or removal, as well as hand cutting and clearing. These practices are highly weather dependent and are scheduled based on site conditions and plant growth.

3. Chemical

In some cases, it may be effective to treat invasive species with either selective or non-selective herbicides. The district uses EPA approved products applied by licensed professionals. Timing of chemical application is key in controlling unwanted plants. The time of the year to make applications is based on plant type, soil temperature, and moisture content.

4. Cultural

Planting seeds of native species and wanted plants is the best cultural practice as a well-developed natural area will not allow unwanted plants to compete. District staff seeds native areas every year, on an as needed basis, when soil temperatures and moisture content are optimal.

When applicable, the district holds regular volunteer opportunities with professionals from the Parks Department to manually remove seed heads from plants for spring planting. These events also educate the community on the importance of native habitats and ecosystems while giving individuals a chance to contribute to the ongoing efforts of the district's natural areas.

Foliage covering shorelines and within bodies of water is not to be cut, treated or harmed without the permission of the Parks Department. This includes dumping of any kind including landscape refuse, which will result in fines to the perpetrator. Furthermore, any influences that could affect water quality other than those approved by the Hoffman Estates Park District are strictly prohibited.

Pond / Basin Management

The Hoffman Estates Park District manages several bodies of water at multiple properties. It is important to note that the primary function of these bodies of water is to provide storm water detention for residential, commercial, and municipal infrastructure. Recreational use is a secondary product and aesthetics the final product of these bodies of water. At certain locations, recreational use is encouraged, and all bodies of water are managed to serve their primary goals, whether that be storm water management, wildlife habitat, or recreational use.

Aquatic Treatments

At the discretion of the Park Services Department, chemical applications to bodies of water managed by the district may be made as needed. When making treatments the district will use Aquatic Herbicides and/or Aquatic Algaecides. To merit applications of aquatic herbicides and/or algaecides, the body of water must have at least 25% of the surface area covered by problematic plant life. Certain bodies of water with a history of algae blooms and or unwanted plant life may be treated without the minimum 25% coverage. The treatment of aquatic weeds can result in oxygen depletion or loss due to decomposition of dead plant material, causing the possible suffocation of aquatic organisms. The district will not treat more than ½ the surface area in a single application and wait at least twenty-one days between treatments. Water quality will be at the discretion of the Parks Department and will be based on functions, habitat, and environmental benefits. All treatments will be done by the Hoffman Estates Park District or district approved contractors. No other outside organizations or persons may alter water without the permission of the Parks Department.

Habitat

The district takes great pride in providing aquatic habitat for many terrestrial animal, native fish, amphibious and migratory bird species. Fishing stocking will take place at the discretion of the Park District at various bodies of water based on environmental and recreational factors. In an effort to preserve fish for recreational use and or harvesting, these sites will remain anonymous to the general public. Fish species may include any or a combination of the following: Blue-gill, Sunfish, Channel-catfish, Northern Pike, Large-mouth Bass, Small-mouth Bass and Crappie. Ice fishing times and locations will be permitted at specific ponds and posted on the district's website. Please refer to the IDNR website below for general fishing information, licensing and harvesting under General Sport fishing Guidelines.

<https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/publications/Documents/00000845.pdf>

Forestry Management

The Hoffman Estates Park District has a diverse and robust arboriculture population spread over 800 acres of park land. It is a priority to continue to establish and retain these specimens in an effort to create habitat for wildlife and benefit the overall well-being of the community.

Furthermore, hazard assessments, removals and new plantings are conducted by district staff or contractual partners and are completed based on safety hazards, environmental needs or at the directions from other governmental agencies.

Removals

All specimens will be removed on an as-needed basis determined by either the district or other governing parties, including village, utility, and county. Any storm damaged trees will be removed within seven working days of failure. Furthermore, any outside property damage incurred will be subject to review by the district. District staff is continuously monitoring our forested areas and tree inventory, but not all dead or dying trees are removed, especially if they pose no threat to surrounding species or public.

Pruning

Trees located in high traffic areas will be trimmed on a cyclical basis by Park Services Division personnel or licensed contractors approved by the district. No outside party is permitted to trim any specimens located on Hoffman Estates Park District properties without the explicit consent of the district. Scheduling and the extent of pruning is monitored and scheduled by the Parks Department.

Preservation

The Hoffman Estates Park District carefully curates a wide variety of both native and non-native species throughout the district in an effort to create a diverse biosphere that adds to the quality of life of the community. With the help of volunteer initiatives and inventory management, the district has successfully obtained Arboretum status and will continue to transform current park land to aid in creating urban forests throughout the Chicagoland suburbs.

Arboretum

Currently, the Park District has one location that has met Arboretum status requirements. Vogeley Park is currently a designated Arboretum and the district will continue to maintain Vogeley Park in order to continue to meet Arboretum requirements.

Property Name	Classification	Turfgrass Management Level	Natural Area Acreage	Aquatic Management	Hoffman Estates Region
Armstrong	Park	II	0	No	South
Beacon Point	Park	III	0	No	West
Beacon Point	Basin	IV	8	No	West
Bergman Pointe	Park	II	1.2	No	North
Bergman Pointe	Basin	II	4.9	Yes	North
Birch	Park	II	0	No	South
Black Bear	Park	II	25.66	Yes	West
Bode-Salem	Park	III	0	No	South
Bo's Run Dog	Park	II	0	No	North
Brittany	Park	II	0.8	No	North
Cannon Crossings	Park	I	4.35	No	West
Canterbury Fields	Park	I	3	No	West
Canterbury	Park	II	4	No	West
Freedom Run Dog	Park	II	0	No	West
Charlemagne Park	Park	II	17	Yes	North
Chestnut	Basin	II	0.6	Yes	South
Chino	Park	II	0	No	South
Cipri	Park	III	0	No	North
Colony	Preserve	IV	3.9	No	North
Colony	Park	II	0	No	North
Community	Park	II	0	Yes	South
Cottonwood	Park	I	0	No	South
Douglas	Basin	III	0	No	North
Eisenhower	Park	I	3.8	No	South
Essex	Preserve	IV	23.24	No	West
Evergreen	Park	II	0.2	Yes	South
Fabbrini	Park	I	2.96	Yes	South
Fairview	Park	II	0	No	South
Field	Park	II	0	No	South
Golf Road	Preserve	IV	13	Yes	West
Highland	Park	II	3.6	Yes	South
Hoffman	Park	II	0	No	South
Hunters Ridge	Basin	II	0.95	No	West
Hunters Ridge East	Basin	III	35	Yes	West
Hunters Ridge	Park	II	0	No	West
Huntington	Park	I	0	No	North
Kingston	Basin	III	0	No	North
Lincoln	Park	III	0	No	North
Locust	Park	II	2.54	No	South
Lombardy	Park	I	0	No	North
MacArthur	Park	II	0	No	South
Maple	Park	II	1.2	No	South
Meadow	Park	III	0	No	North
McDonough	Basin	III	0.1	Yes	West
North	Greenway	III	0	No	North
North Ridge	Park	II	0.4	Yes	North
North Twin	Basin	II	0.5	Yes	South
Oak	Preserve	III	9.7	No	South
Oakdale	Park	II	0	No	South
Olmstead	Park	I	0.8	No	North
Pebble	Park	II	0	No	North
Pine	Park	II	5.42	No	North
Poplar	Park	II	0.75	No	South
Princeton	Park	II	0.8	No	West
Princeton	Basin	III	1.1	Yes	West
Rohrssen	Preserve	IV	4.5	No	West
Seminole	Greenway	III	5.45	No	North
Sheffield	Park	II	0	No	South
Shoe Factory	Basin	III	1.75	Yes	West
Sloan	Park	I	0	No	South
South Ridge	Park	II	0.8	Yes	North
South Twin	Basin	II	0.5	Yes	South
Sundance	Park	II	0	No	North

Sundance	Greenway	III	1.75	No	North
Sycamore	Park	I	0	No	South
Tall Oaks	Park	II	9.6	No	West
Thornbark	Greenway	III	0	No	North
Triangle	Preserve	IV	5.5	No	West
Tropicana	Park	II	0	No	South
Valley	Park	I	0.6	No	North
Victoria	Park	I	93.5	Yes	South
Vogelei	Arb	I	2.83	Yes	South
Walnut	Basin	III	11.2	Yes	West
Westbury	Park	III	0.7	Yes	North
Whispering	Basin	III	0.5	Yes	North
Willow	Park	II	6.4	No	North
Willow	Greenway	II	6.95	No	North
Willow	Preserve	III	1.2	No	North
Wilmington	Basin	III	0	No	South
Winding Trails	Basin	III	3.4	Yes	West
Yorkshire Woods	Basin	II	0.2	Yes	West
Triphahn Center	N/A	I	1.75	Yes	South
The Club at Prairie Stone	N/A	I	0.8	No	West
Willow Recreation Center	N/A	I	5.05	No	North
Parks Services	N/A	III	1.55	No	South
Seascape Family Aquatic Center	N/A	I	1.95	No	South
Bridges of Poplar Creek CC	N/A	I	22.5	Yes	South

