



WPROS
PARKS, RECREATION &
OPEN SPACES
MASTER PLAN



MARCH 2014

“A City within a park where everyone benefits from parks and recreation.”



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Natural Resources and Management

4.1 NATURAL RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Natural resources such as trees, tributaries, wetlands, streams and other natural areas are very important to the Westerville community and are invaluable to the parks system. Preservation of natural resources is essential in maintaining beautiful scenery for current and future citizens. The Parks and Recreation Department aims to preserve as many natural areas as possible in order to provide educational opportunities and to create passive recreational opportunities to citizens.

OVERVIEW

While Westerville parks currently contain a variety of natural resources, it will be important to ensure the continued protection of these resources in and around the park system.

Two goals have been identified by the Parks and Recreation Department related to Natural Resources and Management:

1. The protection of the city's natural resources
2. Community awareness of natural resources found in Westerville

4.2 WHAT ARE NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural resources come in a wide variety of forms, from streams and ponds to large stands of trees. Features that occur naturally within the environment that exists relatively undisturbed by mankind in a natural form is considered a natural resource.

DEFINITIONS

Below are a series of natural resources definitions that will be referenced throughout this chapter.

Natural Resources

Natural resources occur naturally within the environments that exist relatively undisturbed by mankind in a natural form.



Bioretention Areas

Bioretention areas are designed to provide infiltration and plant uptake by temporarily storing, treating and slowly releasing runoff to remove pollutants.

Open Space (Natural Open Space)

Open space is land permanently reserved as a nature preserve, stream protection corridor or other land that naturally regulates storm water. This space provides habitat for natural flora and fauna or protects ecologically sensitive sites such as wetlands and significant forested areas.

Streams and Waterways

Streams and waterways are channels that have a well-defined bed and bank, either natural or artificial that confines and conducts continuous or periodic flowing water in such a way that terrestrial vegetation cannot establish roots within the streambed.

Perennial Stream

Perennial streams carry water more than 80 percent of the year, drying out only during long, dry spells.

Intermittent Stream

Intermittent streams carry water 10 to 80 percent of the year.

Ephemeral Stream

Ephemeral streams carry water only after rain events and shortly thereafter, and carry water less than 20 percent of the time.

Waterbody

A waterbody is any natural or artificial pond, lake, reservoir or other area that ordinarily or intermittently contains water and has a discernible shoreline into which surface waters flow.

Wetlands

Wetlands are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater with a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence or vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

4.3

WHY NATURAL RESOURCES ARE IMPORTANT

Natural resources are important to both the environment and the citizens because they provide important recreational opportunities, wildlife habitats, reduce runoff and improve air and water quality.

FLOOD CONTROL/STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater runoff is rainfall that flows over the ground surface. Stormwater runoff is the number one cause of stream impairment in urban areas. Natural, undeveloped areas allow storm water to make its way through the soil into the groundwater supply. By contrast, buildings and pavement block rain from reaching soil, instead quickly directing it through storm drains that

transport the water to streams. Overwhelmed by the brief but intense water volume, floodwaters scour the stream banks of natural vegetation and erode the stream bed. After wet periods, these creeks often are dry because storm water never enters the groundwater supply, which is a significant source of stream water.

Trees absorb large quantities of water after rainfall events, by taking storm water up through their roots. A mature tree can have a root system that can hold almost 1,500 gallons of rain water. For every 5 percent of tree cover added to a community, storm water runoff is reduced by approximately 2 percent, as the tree directs rainwater down its trunk to the earth.

HABITATS

All natural resources, including streams, ponds, trees and wetlands provide important habitats for wildlife, either temporarily during migration or as permanent homes. Many wildlife species are dependent on the natural resources in which they reside and can be dramatically impacted by even the slightest change to their habitat.

AESTHETIC BENEFITS/INCREASE PROPERTY VALUE

The most observable benefit natural resources provide is their ability to improve the character of the community and enhance the general appearance of development. Natural resources have a positive emotional effect on people by connecting us to nature and reducing stress. Therefore, it should be no surprise that natural resources such as streams and woodlands have a positive impact on property values and enhance the desirability of a location. Creating a more desirable community is important in attracting and retaining skilled residents and businesses.

COST SAVINGS

Some people may consider natural resources and the steps taken to protect them as an extra financial burden to development. This, however, is not always the case. One central Ohio community installed a rain garden and filtration swale instead of traditional storm drain lines during repair work to help drain a small 2.5 acre area. The cost of the traditional improvements would've been more than \$31,000. However, by installing the rain garden and new catch basin for less than \$8,000, the community was able to save more than \$23,000 on the project.



Natural Resources and Management

4.4

NATURAL RESOURCES IN WESTERVILLE

STREAMS

The most significant river corridors within the city are Alum Creek and Big Walnut Creek. Alum Creek is a major north-south regional greenway corridor that connects Westerville south to Columbus and Alum Creek State Park to the north. Alum Creek is also the primary source for Westerville's drinking water. Big Walnut Creek and its Hoover Reservoir is a major north-south regional corridor along the eastern border of Westerville connecting Westerville to Columbus and its suburbs to the south.

Identified tributaries within Westerville are Spring Run, County Line Run, Alkire Run. Spring Run is a major north-south tributary to Alum Creek that has been developed along almost entirely as residential property.

PONDS

A variety of ponds are located throughout Westerville, many of which are man-made to regulate storm water from developments. Regardless of origin, ponds are an important feature that should be preserved because over time, even man-made ponds can become important habitats.

WETLANDS

Preservation of wetland areas are of the utmost importance for the protection of floral, fauna, storm water management and water quality in Westerville. Heritage and College Knolls Wetlands were established when two storm water retention basins were converted into deep and shallow emergent wetlands. City staff worked with developers to preserve the Mariners Cove Wetlands. Boyer Nature Preserve protects a small stream-fed glacial kettle pond and wetlands. The Heritage Park Wetlands were recently enhanced to improve the habitat quality and allow a greater buffering capacity for stormwater run-off and filtration.

TREE CANOPY

As a Tree City USA, and one of only three celebrating its 38th year in 2013, it has long been a commitment of the City of Westerville to maintain the urban forest canopy and educate the public about the benefits of trees. The goal is to increase and maximize

the value of the urban forest canopy which supports the Department vision of becoming a "City within a Park".

Westerville currently maintains over 12,600 street trees and over 4000 park trees. An analysis of the urban forest using the long standing rule of thumb for biodiversity which is the 10-20-30 guideline that suggests that no more than 10 percent of the trees should be from the same species, no more than twenty percent should be from the same genera, and no more than thirty percent should be from the same family has provided very useful information. Crabapples exceed the species limit at 13% and Maples exceed the genera limit at 25%.

Where do we go:

- To meet the goal of maximizing the value of the urban forest canopy trees must be maintained and species diversity must increase. The Tree Inventory will continue to be maintained on GIS to allow for continued monitoring as a valuable management tool

Challenges:

- **Emerald Ash Borer(EAB):** The EAB was confirmed in Westerville in 2007 and has firmly decimated the state of the urban forest. Nearly 1000 ash street trees have been removed and countless other ash on city grounds, parks, and wood lots. There are over 400 street trees remaining that will require removal in the next few years and continued monitoring is required in the natural areas and parks to schedule tree removals as necessary
- **Sidewalk Program:** The City's Sidewalk Reconstruction Program has had a significant impact on the urban forest. Trees with roots causing damage to the sidewalk are generally removed to facilitate the sidewalk reconstruction. Safety still needs to be maintained, but an emphasis needs to be made to preserve trees through the process
- **Pear Management:** For many years as the primary tree for planting, Westerville accumulated thousands of pear trees. Time and experience have taught that the trees can have structural issues as they mature and in storm events can become hazardous. This population must be managed to mitigate any potential problems
- **Diversity:** Understanding we're working with species exceeding recommended limits diversity is a problem that must be addressed. Also, management of the current EAB infestation is evidence that overplanting of any one species will create more possibility for significant tree loss in the event of another introduced pest problem. The Asian

Longhorn Beetle(ALB) has infested a rural area near Cincinnati, OH and has a wide host range of trees. Should the ALB arrive in Westerville there would be a monumental loss of trees

- **Maximizing Urban Forest Value:** There are a significant number of ornamental trees planted in sites that can accommodate large shade trees. Planting larger trees will exponentially increase the value of the planting site as the tree matures

Action Items:

- **Street Tree Master List:** The Street Tree Master List guides all street tree planting in Westerville. Using the information provided from the tree inventory analysis, the Street Tree Master List was updated to help achieve divisional goals. The list now recommends three species of tree for each street and will be designed to place the appropriate size of tree in each space. Trees will be selected to maximize the value at each planting site by planting the largest tree species for the site. Using three species for each street will help to diversify the urban forest
- **EAB Management Plan:** Continued implementation and funding of the EAB Management Plan will aid in progression through the loss of our ash trees and recovery with replacement trees following the Street Tree Master List
- **Sidewalk Program:** Monitoring the industry for new and successful procedures will help in the preservation of existing trees during construction events. Root pruning trees prior to sidewalk excavation will help prevent the need for removal at the time of excavation. Any trees requiring removal will be replaced following the Street Tree Master List
- **Pear Management Plan:** Continued implementation of the Pear Management Plan will help prevent the

loss of pear trees in storm events. In addition it will help improve the diversity of the urban forest by replacing trees following the Street Tree Master List

- **Tree Replacement Program:** The City of Westerville plants replacement trees for removed street trees at no cost to residents. This program takes place each Fall and replaces as many trees as possible. Removal locations are evaluated for replacement using recommended guidelines for spacing from other infrastructure to lessen the chance of damage in the future as trees mature. Replacement trees are selected using the Street Tree Master List
- **Crab Apple Management Plan:** Following the completion of EAB Management Plan a Crabapple Management Plan will be created. This will not only allow the species to be brought within the recommended level but will also allow for more appropriate species to be planted as replacements
- **Funding:** Continued funding for tree maintenance and replacement is vital to allow for future growth of the tree count and health of the urban forest. Continued implementation of these action steps will allow the urban forest to grow and maximize the benefit to citizens and visitors of Westerville.



Development Standards Guidelines

STANDARDS

The purpose of this section is to provide general guidelines for the Department to follow to upgrade existing parks and recreation facilities and to guide the orderly development of new parks and recreation facilities and preservation of open space. The plan includes recommendations in the following areas:

- General Development Guidelines
- Land Acquisition Guidelines
- Recreation Facilities Guidelines
- Park Development Guidelines
- Bikeways and Recreational Pathway Guidelines
- Greenways and Conservation Easements Guidelines



GENERAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

- Review placement of traffic control signage in parks
- All port-a-johns at park sites shall be enclosed by a landscaped screen or fence
- Add or renovate picnic facilities and shelters at all neighborhood and community parks
- Audit all park and facility lighting to improve energy efficiency and develop park standards
- Upgrade landscape plantings to include year-round plantings and hardscape materials such as pavement
- Develop facilities which serve all citizen needs, including active and passive, cultural and performing arts
- Complete the standard department signage program for the city's entire park system
- No overhead electric/utility facilities shall be permitted in parks without prior approval of the Parks and Recreation Director
- All parks, other than mini parks, shall have off-street parking. All parking areas for parks shall be well-landscaped and developed as "car parks"
- Develop restrooms at all community and neighborhood park sites where scheduled field events and/or picnic shelter rentals occur
- Ensure standards for uniformity for shelters, playground equipment, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, benches, etc. for all city parks and facilities. Include standards for facilities within the City's Historic Districts
- Develop updated master plans, with citizen/neighborhood input, for all existing and recommended park sites. Examine and plan all existing park sites to include the development of recreational pathways, playgrounds and other park amenities. Where possible, connect to City's Bikeway/Recreational Pathway System/Greenways

LAND ACQUISITION GUIDELINES

- Acceptance of detention areas by the city for parkland is not recommended
- Protect and preserve quality of natural areas, greenways, ravines, waterways, wetlands and woodlands with conservation easements
- Greenway corridors should be a minimum width of fifty (50') feet. A two hundred (200') foot width corridor is preferred along waterways
- Fee simple acquisition is preferred for greenways and all riparian corridors along major waterways, i.e., Alum Creek, Big Walnut Creek and the larger parcels along tributaries
- Promote conservation easements held by the City of Westerville along minor tributaries, i.e., Spring Run, Alkyre Run, Spring Hollow and other intermittent streams
- Promote parkland acquisition within three (3) mile review jurisdiction. Encourage Blendon, Orange and Genoa Townships to acquire/develop neighborhood park sites
- Continue to preserve greenways in collaboration with adjoining cities, townships and agencies
- Develop partnerships and utilize school/church sites as neighborhood parks in land deficient and under served areas, i.e., McVay, Central College
- Acceptance of mini parks by the city for parkland is not recommended
- Require twenty-five (25') feet minimum easement for recreational paths for a minimum pavement width of



ten (10') feet with a minimum shoulder width of two (2') feet either side. Variances require Parks and Recreation Department approval

- Partner with outside agencies, i.e., Metro Parks, City of Columbus, Blendon Township, Genoa Township for joint use and cooperative agreement to reduce acquisition needs
- Monitor development plans, pursue identified acquisition parcels and encourage developer to utilize a community development authority to charge for the dedication of parklands and improvements
- Eminent Domain is not a department accepted acquisition practice and will only be used in extreme circumstances
- Annually review land acquisition priorities based on criteria/considerations for ranking projects on attached form. Adjust five year CIP program document
- Pursue grants, gifts and bequests, life estates and parkland dedication to reduce financial burden of acquisition
- Establish a parkland dedication ordinance
- Contact property owners to establish communication with the intent to acquire easements and negotiate first Right-of-Refusals
- Prioritize acquisition of neighborhood park sites uninterrupted by non-residential roads to provide 50% active and 50% passive open space for residential areas currently not being served within a ¼ mile to ½ mile service radius of an existing park
- Acquire community park sites, ideally 30–40 acres, served by arterial or collector streets to provide active and passive open space and facilities to accommodate group activities and the expected growth of daytime (Work Force) population. Acquire land as part of development of office and industrial/commercial areas. Consider partnerships with adjacent communities and agencies
- Maintain public access along Alum Creek/Big Walnut Creek
- Acquire adjacent lands to existing parks as necessary to accommodate growth, improve aesthetics and function of that park or facility

Development Standards Guidelines

RECREATION FACILITIES GUIDELINES

- Develop facilities which serve a balance of citizen identified needs including but not limited to: athletic, educational, health and wellness, recreational, cultural, arts and performing arts
- Complete a Feasibility study to monitor existing facilities, guide facility development, and to determine the cost/benefit of improvements or projects
- Westerville will provide facilities to meet the population's special needs. Facilities must meet the appropriate code compliance including but not limited to: Ohio Building Code, Franklin County Health Department, and American Disabilities Act
- Facilities should be developed to accommodate the needs of all income groups and ages. Inter-generational facilities will be promoted
- Audit all facility lighting and HVAC systems to improve energy efficiency
- Create standards of uniformity for branding of all Westerville facilities
- Operation and maintenance management plans will be developed for all facilities
- Westerville will emphasize the development of sustainable green facilities that are friendly to the environment. The city supports redevelopment/preservation and conservation
- Facilities are to be designed for operational efficiency and to be customer friendly
- Partnerships will be examined for facility and program development
- Facility development will consider city planning documents and master plans



PARK DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

- Monitor the physical and psychological carrying capacity of parks and facilities to assist in the prioritization of development of new parks and facilities
- Provide the Level of Service (LOS) to meet the changing demographics and needs of the community
- Development of neighborhood parks shall provide a wide range of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) as a tool for multiple satisfactions of park users
- Utilize NRPA Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines" as a framework for park development
- Develop existing detention basins into wetland sites where appropriate
- Develop an adequate number of athletic fields to meet citizen use demand to permit yearly rehabilitation
- As park open space and recreational facilities are developed, a corresponding maintenance plan and associated costs should be developed and reflected in the City's operation budgets
- Utilize a uniform signage program for the City's entire park system

- No overhead electric/utility facilities should be permitted in parks without prior approval of the Parks and Recreation Department
- Parks, other than mini parks shall have off-street parking. All parking areas for parks shall be well-landscaped and developed as a “car parks”
- Develop restrooms at all community and those neighborhood park sites where scheduled field events and/or picnic shelter rentals occur
- Follow standards for uniformity for shelters, playground equipment, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, benches, etc. for all city parks and facilities. Include standards for facilities within the City’s Historic Districts
- Develop master plans, with citizen/neighborhood input, for all existing and new park sites. Examine and plan all existing park sites to include the development of leisure paths to playgrounds, other park amenities and provide a looped path system. Where possible connect to City’s Bikeway/Leisure Path System/Greenways
- Build separate age group playground facilities
- All playground and park facilities to meet ADA, ASTM and CPSC standards
- Protect existing greenways ravines, wetlands and woodlands
- Greenway corridors should be a minimum width of fifty (50’) feet. A two hundred (200’) foot width corridor is preferred along waterways
- Review all new and/or rehabilitation of roads and sidewalks to accommodate Westerville’s Bikeway/Leisure Path System
- Require twenty-five (25’) feet minimum easement for leisure path easements for a minimum pavement width of ten (10’) feet with a minimum shoulder width of two (2’) feet either side. Variances require Parks and Recreation Department approval
- For city walks and internal one-way path standard shall be a minimum width of four and one-half (4 1/2’) feet, optimum five (5’) feet wide. Two-way path standard minimum width of eight (8’) feet, optimum ten (10’) feet wide
- Continue to seek grants from all available alternative funding sources when such funding opportunities occur
- Establish park/school partnerships in neighborhoods which are currently not serviced by the City Park System within City corporate limits
- Promote natural areas in parks to reduce high maintenance turf areas
- Annually review department program goals, (LOS) Level of Service and (ROC) Recreation Opportunity Spectrum of existing facilities, and public input to identify needs, issues, and concerns. Confirm and set goals for next five years
- Review five year CIP budget annually to adjust based on current needs, priorities, and City of Westerville financial framework. Review Recreation Trust Fund balance and investigate other funding sources. Apply for grants if applicable
- Utilize criteria/considerations for ranking new development projects to adjust CIP documents
- Keep up to date Capital Equipment Replacement schedules and costs for all parks and facilities
- Develop systems to manage operations efficiently and effectively

Development Standards Guidelines

GREENWAYS AND CONSERVATION EASEMENTS GUIDELINES

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- Preserve and protect existing greenway corridors, ravines, wetlands, flood plains and woodlands in Westerville from development for future generations
- Greenway corridors should be a minimum width of fifty (50') feet. A two hundred (200') foot width corridor is required along waterways, measured from top of bank. A three hundred (300') foot width corridor is preferred to protect water quality
- Develop existing detention basins into bioretention or wetland sites where appropriate
- Establish greenbelt buffer areas separating residential areas from surrounding non-residential development
- Adopt and institute recommendations from the:
 - o "Greenways: A Plan for Franklin County"
 - o "Greenways: A Plan for Alum Creek"
 - o "Lower Alum Creek Watershed Action Plan"
- Maintain Public access along Alum Creek/Big Walnut Creek
- Continue to preserve quality natural areas (greenways, ravines, waterways, flood plain, wetlands and woodlands) in collaboration with adjoining cities townships and other public or private agencies
- Manage and monitor conservation easements and greenways and maintain public/private easement data base matrix
- Encourage use of native species & control of invasive species
- Develop Natural Resource Management Plans for all greenways and natural areas
- Provide nature interpretive facilities and increase educational programming where appropriate





ENVIRONMENTAL AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Westerville Parks and Recreation Department takes a leadership role to protect, preserve and improve the quality of Natural Resources in a sustainable manner while providing a balance to meet the demand for recreation opportunities to create a city within a park. It is our intent to achieve this goal through environmental planning and protection, sustainable management of natural resources, waste management, energy conservation, use of environmentally friendly products and environmental education. “Cool” city and “green” community initiatives will guide the department in Environmental and Resource Management Planning.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND PROTECTION

- Pursue fee simple acquisition of identified parcels for parks, wetland protection, ravines, wood lots, riparian corridors, greenways and trails
- Pursue conservation easements to promote reclamation and protection of environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, riparian corridors and floodplains, ravines, wooded areas, greenways and other natural habitats for existing and new development projects
- Master plan sites based on site environmental analysis to balance environmental protection and recreational development
- Balance active and passive areas in all neighborhood park sites
- Maintain relationship with Franklin County Greenways, Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries, Friends of Big Walnut Creek, Greenheads, and other conservation organizations, land trusts and preservation groups to assist in open space preservation
- Combine review of all new development and redevelopment projects and provide Planning and Development Department comments regarding protection and impacts on the environment
- Continue a supportive relationship with Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- Maintain Urban Forestry Division tree planting replacement, and Heritage Tree programs
- Revise Street Tree Master Plan to incorporate biodiversity and latest arboricultural practices
- Monitor and follow any federal and state endangered species protection acts
- Continue wetland Master Plans and mitigation monitoring
- Provide erosion control for all park development and monitor private developments conformance to EPA requirements
- Practice xeriscaping using more native/drought resistant species and reduce high maintenance turf areas
- Follow water conservation restrictions; promote and utilize water conservation tools and practices with staff training
- Audit and promote retrofitting facilities with conservation hardware
- Encourage/support car pooling, ride sharing, development and use of mass transit through the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) and Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)
- Establish an IPM (Integrated Pest Management) program

Development Standards Guidelines

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Recycle trees and branches as wood chips and firewood. Work with Solid Waste Authority, Electric Division and Service Department (Christmas Trees)
- Reduce salt and other ice treatment chemicals in parks, paths and parks maintained roadways. Work with Service Department and encourage use of sand or other biodegradable products
- Encourage use of reusable mugs, plates, silverware, rags, tablecloths, etc., opposed to disposable items
- Encourage reuse of left over materials, and supplies, or recycle items or equipment. Auction or donate items and use excess products for recreation programs
- Ban the release of balloons at park events
- Cooperate with citywide toxic material and pollution monitoring and cleanup program, outside groups and Fire Department. Include a program of response to any toxic spills that involve parklands
- Establish recycle opportunities for all divisions and departments. Coordinate with community contracted recycling program. Recycle all aluminum, glass, office paper, newspaper, and corrugated cardboard
- Establish opportunities for the public in parks and at facilities to recycle glass and aluminum on site
- Recycle batteries, light bulbs, anti-freeze, motor oil, paints, cleaners, computers, and Freon whenever feasible
- Partner with Service Department to promote household hazardous waste drop off events in the city
- Use of in-house recycled landscape materials, such as wood chips and compost
- Increase use of recycled products, such as plastic timbers, Trex lumber, recycled paper, concrete, asphalt grindings, etc.
- Encourage procurement and use of products that are biodegradable or have a high-recycled content
- Institute Waste Reduction and Disposal Office and Facility Practices. Print and photocopy everything on both sides of page

- Post memos in a centralized area or circulate one copy with a routing slip. Copy reports and place in main file for shared use
- Reduce duplication of files
- Consolidate and share newspaper and magazine subscriptions
- Increase use of electronic mail system and computerized records. Download files on disc and reduce hard copy files
- Maintain inventory of all hazardous materials and MSDS files. Train staff in the handling and storage of such materials according to state and federal standards

ENERGY CONSERVATION

- Review energy audit and institute recommendations. Convert inefficient lighting to more energy efficient systems
- Continue preventative maintenance programs to maintain efficient heating and cooling systems
- Continue vehicle equipment preventative maintenance program to reduce emissions and fuel consumptions. Train personnel on proper driving techniques
- Continue specifying solar panels for bikeway crossings, lightning prediction, and security lighting. Investigate other alternative sources of power and energy to reduce consumption of energy including passive systems, such as orientation, energy efficient windows and shading
- Encourage planting of trees for windbreaks and shade for cooling
- Evaluate programs and procedures to reduce mileage driven by staff. Utilize teleconferencing and electronic mail as energy-saving practices

USE OF ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

- Specify and utilize phosphate free biodegradable soaps and detergents
- Reduce the use of petroleum-based inks, paints, stains and wood preservatives in signs, construction, and maintenance and graphic material. Encourage investigation of alternatives, such as soy inks, non-toxic paints and stains
- Encourage use of non-toxic herbicides and test their effectiveness
- Specify ACQ arsenic-free wood preservatives. Eliminate use of wood preservatives containing copper naphthenate and creosote. Develop and use alternate solutions in lieu of pressure-treated woods, such as Trex or other recycled products
- Modify project specifications to utilize environmentally friendly products
- Reduce use of all CFC products including aerosol sprays
- Increase use of recycled paper and products. Encourage use of biodegradable or non-disposable products

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

- Partner with FACT, Franklin County Greenways and other environmental groups to promote and educate citizens on Environmental Stewardship
- Partner with Columbus & Franklin County Metro Parks environmental programming efforts to supplement environmental education needs and avoid program duplication
- Expand environmental education programming on back yard riparian conservation and wild life programs, wetlands and conservation to develop citizen awareness, appreciation and understand of our natural world
- Develop and expand facilities, greenways, and natural areas to increase participation, awareness and education of the community. Complete Master Plans for wetlands, preserved, and water resources
- Promote leisure activities that are more environmentally friendly, such as recreational pathway friendly community
- Expand interpretation opportunities at Boyer, Otterbein Lake, Heritage/College Knolls, Heritage Park, Bicentennial Tree Trail and Alum Creek Greenway to promote and educate citizens on cultural, historical, scenic and aesthetic resources
- Partner with schools, neighborhood associations. Shade Tree Commission and local garden clubs to create environmental education opportunities in parks and open space areas

Development Standards Guidelines

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Local, regional and state natural features are outlined under the Existing Conditions Analysis-Natural Features in the PROS 2020. In addition, the “Greenways: A Plan for Franklin County,” “Greenways: A Plan for Alum Creek” and “Lower Alum Creek Watershed Action Plan,” provide the inventory, assessment, standards and recommendations for management of the City’s natural resources. The following standards and procedures have been adopted to provide staff guidelines for management of the City’s natural resources.

- Meet or exceed the 1983 NRPA standards suggesting a ‘core’ system of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 populations
- Standards recommend preservation of all wetlands, ravines, high quality woodlands, floodway, floodplain and riparian corridors with no limit on acreage
- Preserve all existing greenways from encroachment
- Develop existing detention basins into wetland sites where appropriate
- Improve the quality of the City’s urban forest through proper management by our Urban Forestry Division and Shade Tree Commission. Encourage biodiversity in street tree master plan
- Establishment of a greenbelt or buffer area separating the concentration of non-residential development from surrounding areas
- All Greenway corridors shall be a minimum width of fifty (50’) feet. A two hundred (200’) foot width corridor is preferred along waterways
- Encourage use of native species and control of invasive species
- Institute sustainable systems through biodiversity, restoration of ecosystems, and the natural function of Natural areas. Reduce mow and high maintenance areas
- Provide natural interpretive facilities and increase educational programming
- Utilize biological engineering solutions and institute best management practices as design and maintenance solutions
- Institute (IPM) Integrated Pest Management Program
- Review all development plans and provide comments to Planning and Development Department
- Individual National Resource Management Plans should be developed for all natural areas in existing parks and future parks, greenways and conservation easement areas and the following should be considered: base maps with GIS topographic and aerial photographs; USGS and National Wetlands inventory maps; site surveys to identify property lines, easements and existing improvements; any deed and/or zoning restrictions; Franklin and Delaware County soil surveys; flora and fauna inventory; state National Heritage Inventory (NHI) with Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR); preserving significant habitat; historical mapping, site history and archeological as required; educational and recreation programming if applicable



NATURAL RESOURCES GUIDELINES

The Westerville Parks and Recreation Department takes a leadership role to protect, preserve and improve the quality of Natural Resources in a sustainable manner while providing a balance to meet the demand for recreation opportunities to create a city within a park. It is our intent to achieve this goal through environmental planning and protection, sustainable management of natural resources, waste management, energy conservation, use of environmentally friendly products and environmental education. "Green" community initiatives will guide the department in Environmental and Resource Management Planning.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND PROTECTION

- Pursue fee simple acquisition of identified parcels for parks, wetland protection, ravines, wood lots, riparian corridors, greenways and trails
- Pursue conservation easements to promote reclamation and protection of environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, riparian corridors and floodplains, ravines, wooded areas, greenways and other natural habitats for existing and new development projects
- Master plan sites based on site environmental analysis to balance environmental protection and recreational development
- Balance active and passive areas in all neighborhood park sites
- Maintain relationship with Franklin County Greenways, Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries, Friends of Big Walnut Creek, Greenheads, and other conservation organizations, land trusts and preservation groups to assist in open space preservation
- Combine review of all new development and redevelopment projects and provide Planning and Development Department comments regarding protection and impacts on the environment
- Continue a supportive relationship with Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- Maintain Urban Forestry Division tree planting replacement, and Heritage Tree programs
- Revise Street Tree Master Plan to incorporate biodiversity and latest arboricultural practices

- Monitor and follow any federal and state endangered species protection acts
- Continue wetland Master Plans and mitigation monitoring
- Provide erosion control for all park development and monitor private developments conformance to EPA requirements
- Practice xeriscaping using more native/drought resistant species and reduce high maintenance turf areas
- Follow water conservation restrictions; promote and utilize water conservation tools and practices with staff training
- Audit and promote retrofitting facilities with conservation hardware
- Encourage/support car pooling, ride sharing, development and use of mass transit through the COTA (Central Ohio Transit Authority) and MORPC (Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission)
- Establish an IPM (Integrated Pest Management) program