

Cottonwood Creek HOA

Natural Grass Maintenance & Mowing Plan

PREPARED BY CHRIS BILAU FOR THE HOA

Purpose: At our Home Owners Association's Annual Meeting in November, there were requests for a more formal plan discussing the pros and cons of mowing and maintaining the natural grass areas. Following is a proposed plan documenting the goals of the plan along with advantages of mowing and not mowing.

- Goals of our Natural Grass Maintenance and Mowing Plan:
 - Maintain the Natural Beauty of our Neighborhood
 - Neighborhood's desire for healthy brome grass areas
 - Weed Control
 - Volunteer tree management
 - This plan will be part of the agenda at each Annual HOA Meeting

Advantages:

We currently mow in the month of July. A later mowing allows for the brome grass to fully mature, and during the mowing process, a certain amount of heads/seeds fall to the ground promoting a natural over seeding. It also prevents larger weeds from growing back in the late summer.

The Advantages of a periodic mowing include:

- Cuts down on weed growth.
- Helps prevent volunteer tree growth.
- Promotes the growth of the grasses with thicker and more dense stands of grass.
- Safer than a planned burn off (fire) of the natural grass area. This isn't very feasible in a neighborhood environment.
- Helps with insect and grasshopper control.
- Brings in additional revenue which helps offset the maintenance of the neighborhood landscape and roads.

Our neighborhood has done a great job of pulling together for cleanup work days in the spring and fall. We are finding that by just cutting these volunteer trees down, they are growing back rather quickly. In the future, we will be treating the stumps after cutting the trees down to help prevent them from coming back.

Advantages of Not Mowing

- A clean, weed free area of tall brome grass is very beautiful in the late summer and fall months.
- Less work for those involved with organizing & coordinating the mowing and maintenance of these areas.
- As the neighborhood fills up, it will be less feasible to mow the natural grass areas.

Reminder: Each individual lot owner is responsible for weed control and grass maintenance for their own lot.

Our thoughts are that mowing helps in weed control. If we stop mowing, we will need to deal with weed control.

Following are pictures of what our natural grass areas will like if we don't maintain them:

Examples like these can be seen all over the county and along the highways.



Notice the junk volunteer trees taking over these pastures

Notice the poor stands of grass



Weed Control and Fertilizing of Natural Grass Areas

Our neighborhood is starting to get more noxious weeds developing in the natural grass areas. The main entrances to the neighborhood have a lot of weeds, volunteer trees, and thinner stands of natural grass. The roadways have thinner stands of natural grass thus allowing more weed growth.

- In an effort to facilitate a better stand of grass at the entrances, the Board decided to fertilize one of the entrances this spring to see if this will help enhance the appearance of the grass. This was completed in late April.
- As you can see in the pictures, the weeds are taking away from the aesthetics of the natural grass areas. The Board is planning on spraying these weeds at the same entrance in late May and along a few roadways as a test to see if we can gain control of the weeds. This spraying will not be done around any homes, and individual homeowners will be responsible for their own weed control.



As you can see in the pictures, there are a couple different types of Clover, Crown Vetch, and volunteer trees



Do you want your lot mowed this year?

- I have many notes from last year on who does and doesn't want their lot mowed this year. Please email Chris Bilau at chrisb@project-advocates.com on what you want done on your lot this year. I am currently working with two farmers to secure bids on mowing of the natural grass areas. The mowing will be better coordinated this year with more advanced notice. Thank you, and the Board welcomes your opinions!