

Landscape/Grounds Maintenance Plan for Dutch Creek HOA(s) – 2007

Mission: To maintain all of the irrigated grass common areas, entrances, flower beds, trees, pool, HOA non-irrigated properties, adjacent JEFFCO Open Space, and the sprinkler systems at a level that will be aesthetically pleasing, and hopefully will enhance our community property values. The common grounds will be maintained at a high quality standard that reflects neighborhood pride of ownership. Keeping maintenance cost in line will be an objective.

GROUND MAINTENANCE FOR IRRIGATED AREAS

Management Guidelines:

1. A professional lawn service will be used to mow, trim, edge, and aerate the irrigated common areas, pool areas, and entrances for both the Master and Filing III. A contract has been let and the frequency of mowing will be once a week and as required.
2. Fertilize and spray weeds as required. A minimum of two times a year.
3. Use Jefferson County for spraying noxious weeds in the Open Space areas two times a year.
4. Use Denver Urban Drainage/Flood control to line trim along streams on Weaver and Lily Gulch as required.
5. Mow and maintain the non-irrigated areas as described in the maintenance plan for non-irrigated areas. Volunteers will do the mowing whenever possible, if not feasible; the service will be paid for by the HOA.
Volunteers will maintain flowers in flowerbeds. Landscaping, mulching, bush and tree trimming will be paid for by the HOAs per further discussion and agreement.
6. Labor will be provided by professional contractors, high school students, and volunteers. Quality standards, skill requirements, cost, availability, and manageability will be used to make the decision on which source to use.
7. Repair and/or maintain all existing equipment on an annual schedule or as necessary.
8. Work on optimizing water usage and reducing sprinkler repairs.

GROUND MAINTENANCE FOR NON-IRRIGATED AREAS

Management Philosophy:

Riparian zones are those natural areas on either side of a stream channel where life begins: bug, insect, crustacean, fish, mammal, avian species and plant life all thrive in the habitat provided by riparian zones. Within our sub-urban landscapes, these riparian zones are the most ecologically diverse and are highly productive for native plant and wildlife species.

A riparian zone is created by a raised water table that is associated with natural streams. Within these zones of increased water, grasses, woody plants, trees and forbs thrive. The types of plants change as one moves from the stream edge to the outer limits of the raised water table. Where the raised water table ends, xeric (drier, hot) sites occur that do not support a wide variety of plant and animal life. The plant species change dramatically to the semi-arid, sage brush and barren ground that is common throughout Colorado.

Here in Dutch Creek we are fortunate to have two riparian zones that bisect our community – Lily Gulch and Dutch Creek.

It should be the goal and desire of everyone in the community to see that these riparian zones are managed in a way that sustains the proper environment for plant and animal growth. The proposed ground maintenance plan for non-irrigated land reflects that strategy.

An accepted rule-of-thumb established by scientists studying riparian zones is that there should be 10 feet of natural vegetation on each side of the stream for each foot of stream width. Because of variations in stream width and position of water tables, these zones of natural vegetation on Lily Gulch and Dutch Creek vary from 10 to as much as 60 feet, and probably will average about 30 feet.

The riparian zones in Lily Gulch and Dutch Creek have a significant invasion of “noxious weeds” -- primarily Canada Thistle. These noxious weeds are exotic, often imported plant species that if left unchecked, choke out native grass, forb and woody species, thereby reducing the diversity and productivity of the zones.

The proposed plan is an effort to maintain the natural vegetation and control noxious weeds in the riparian zones, and in general provide an aesthetically pleasing transition from highly cultured back yards to more wild areas along the streams.

The proposed plan is as follows:

1. This spring establish an undulating line which depicts the outer edge of the raised water table. In some areas this line will have to be adjusted to reflect existing development. This area will be mowed to an average height of 8 – 10 inches and will be mowed two to three times per season depending on moisture conditions. We will mow more often during wet conditions and less frequently during dry conditions.

During the first couple of years until we get the undesirable weeds under control, JEFFCO Open Space will spray these areas to help control the weeds. Once the weeds are brought under control, it is felt that we can continue control of the weeds just by mowing.

2. Within the stream banks and a short distance on either side of the channels all woody and desirable plant species will be “flagged”. Denver Urban Drainage and Flood Control will then line-trim these areas avoiding all of the “flagged” plant material. This treatment will occur two to three times per season as needed. Where needed, an attempt will be made to increase the amount of trees and shrubs in these areas by planting, transplanting, etc.

3. Outside of the established raised water table zone or on more xeric sites between property fences and the natural zones, the height of the grasses will be reduced to 6 inches and mowed more often – probably once a month, again depending on moisture conditions.
4. Bike paths will be trimmed (one mower deck width on each side of the paths) about once a month, again depending on moisture conditions.
5. Homeowners will be asked to trim the land immediately outside the existing fences for those properties bordering Dutch Creek and Lily Gulch. The common property on the outside of the fences bordering Pierce St., Coal Mine and Marshall CT. will be maintained by the HOAs.

The goal of this management plan is to maintain a healthy riparian zone and create a natural and neat looking area that is acceptable to the homeowners. To achieve this goal we have to retain the proper amount of vegetation to keep the soil as cool and moist as possible.