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# VEGETATION AND MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR THE MERRITT PASTURE

**REVISED****JUNE 24, 2002**

This plan includes procedures to address a number of vegetation and maintenance issues including:

- Zone Management
- Pond and dam maintenance
- Gate maintenance and enhancement

## **ZONE MANAGEMENT OF THE MERRITT PASTURE**

The primary goal of this plan is to implement a zone-based land management and mowing plan that will allow a variety of human activities to take place on the property while at the same time allowing a diverse number of plant species to live on the site. Seven zones have been established over the property, each of which have a different management goal and related mowing schedule. All of the zones are shown on the attached map.

### **ZONE 1 – Tree Removal from Fordham Boulevard Right of Way:**

Protection of the view into the pasture from Highway 15-501 and Fordham Boulevard is the primary goal of management within Zone 1. In May 2002 a relatively small area of young trees within and directly adjacent to the Fordham Boulevard right-of-way were removed in order to enhance views into the pasture. We expect that tree removal in this area will be necessary about once every 10 years.

### **ZONE 2 – Western Interior:**

Enhancement of passive recreation opportunities is the primary goal within this zone. The more frequent mowing schedule will allow people to freely move throughout the area, picnic, fly kites, and recreate in a number of ways that require large open areas. This zone is about 10 acres in size and will be maintained in a manner that is consistent with past pasture operations. Mowing and/or haymaking will take place in the spring and fall. In unusually wet years a third mowing may be necessary to maintain the vista and allow for passive recreation. Existing trees and new pockets of trees will be allowed to grow.

### **ZONE 3 – Milkweed Area:**

Protection of dense stands of Milkweed plants will be the primary goal within Zone 3. The area will be mowed once per year, in the spring in order to protect Monarch butterfly habitat.

#### **ZONE 4 – Central and Eastern Interior:**

Diversity of plant and animal life will be emphasized within the 10 – 15 acres of Zone 4. Initially, some of the land will have to be cleared, grubbed and seeded, while some other areas will be returned to pasture with a bush hog. This process will initially result in a disturbed and disruptive appearance, but the end result (within one year) will be a return to pasture. This area will be mowed once per year in order to keep woody plants from growing large enough to prevent mowing with conventional mowing machines. The mowing schedule will vary from year to year in order to allow a diversity of species to emerge on the site. Human activity will be possible some of the year. However, the vegetation in this portion of the site will frequently be too dense to allow recreational uses of the property.

#### **ZONE 5 – Removal of Invasive Species:**

Removal of exotic plant species will occur on an occasional basis within this zone in order to give native plant species opportunities to establish. This area will be selectively cleared of dense growths of invasive species such as honeysuckle and multiflora rose. As staffing permits, we would undertake this initial clearing with the use of machines. Use of machines will be required every 3-5 years to clear the site and keep these species under control.

Other non-native species of plants can be found in all other zones. Volunteer groups will be allowed to actively engage in removal of non-native species of plants throughout the entire property.

#### **ZONE 6 – Forest Restoration:**

The management goal in Zone 6 will be to allow trees to naturally regenerate on the eastern property line, in the southeast portion of the site and adjacent to Morgan Creek. A forested buffer of at least 100 feet will be maintained along the creek to help protect water quality. Because an OWASA easement provides a 30 foot cleared swath, the actual forest regeneration area will be about 130 feet from the edge of the creek bank

#### **ZONE 7 – Perimeter Trail:**

This zone will be provided to maintain and enhance the walking trail that has served the site for at least 10 years. The trail will be mowed as frequently as needed to keep it walkable. The current trail will be widened from its 2-3 foot width to a width of 8-10 feet.

## **POND AND DAM MAINTENANCE**

Pond edge trees were removed in May 2002. Trees will be removed as needed from the dam.

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## **GATE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT**

The maintenance access gate and fence will be repaired as needed. A gate suitable for pedestrians was installed adjacent to the existing maintenance access gate in June 2002.

# MERRITT PASTURE MAINTENANCE MAP

