A NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Agencies promoting reduced mowing policies and practices include:

- National Recreation and Park Association
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Ohio Turnpike Commission
- Pennsylvania Conservation Reserve Enhancement
- Nebraska Statewide Arboretum
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Department of Agricultural

Other communities implementing reduced mowing policies and practices:

- Evans, Colorado
- Fort Collins, Colorado
- Rock Island, Illinois
- Muncie, Indiana
- Bloomington, Minnesota
- Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Greensboro, North Carolina
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- El Paso, Texas
- Houston, Texas

Projects in and around the Lincoln community:

- Antelope Creek Tributary in Antelope Park
- Larson Park
- Colonial Hills Park
- Holmes Lake

Lincoln Parks & Recreation
Long Grass Program

WHAT IS A LONG GRASS AREA?

Designated long grass areas are made up of existing vegetation, generally a turf type tall fescue/bluegrass blend or a bluegrass/rye blend with the intent of being seeded to a warm season grass/wild flower blend.

Lincoln Parks & Recreation
parks.lincoln.ne.gov

WHY CREATE LONG GRASS AREAS?

The Lincoln Parks and Recreation implementation of reducing mowing in parks has multiple benefits to our community. This practice is also consistent with the City of Lincoln Municipal Code and Stormwater Drainage Design Standards, as well as state and federal guidelines.

Environmental Benefits

- Reduces pesticide use
- Reduces excess nutrient and sediment runoff
- Improves native plant germination and regeneration
- Improves biodiversity
- Enhances riparian habitat
- Improves dissolved oxygen levels
- Increases bank stability
- Reduces competition with weeds
- Reduces noise pollution
- Ground water recharge
- Creates bird and butterfly habitat

Educational Benefits

- Addresses Nature Deficit Disorder
- Creates opportunities for local school curriculum

Social Benefits

- Reconnects people to nature
- Encourages exploration of flora and fauna

Economic Benefits

- Reduces fuel cost and equipment usage

Aesthetic Benefits

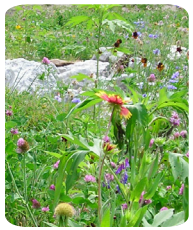
- Adds color, character and texture

WHAT IS THE CONVERSION PROCESS?

Many long grass areas will be converted to native grass. Typical native grass stands range from 12" to 36" in height and will take 3 to 5 years to establish. Periodic mowing and chemical control will be used as needed to control weeds and woody vegetation. The department's goal is to convert 20-25 acres to native grasses annually.

HOW ARE AREAS CHOSEN FOR CONVERSION?

Most parks have active use areas that include playgrounds, picnic areas, sports fields, etc. All other areas may be considered for long grass establishment.



HOW ARE THESE AREAS MAINTAINED?

Weed control in these areas is made through spot treatment applications. Large area infestations may require broadcast applications of herbicides during the fall season, if necessary. Long grass areas typically receive one to three mowings per year to a height of 6" to 10" in height, depending on species, composition, management goals and woody plant invasion.

CITY POLICY REQUIRING REDUCED MOWING IN PARKS

City of Lincoln Municipal Code 26.23.120 Easements

Minimum flood corridors shall be preserved and dedicated along drainage ways which have a defined bed and bank or drain an area equal to or greater than 150 acres, for purposes of preserving riparian vegetation and preventing encroachment within the corridors by buildings, fill, or structures; provided, however, that encroachments within the corridors will be permitted in accordance with Chapter 2.05 (Stormwater Drainage Design Standards) of the City of Lincoln Design Standards and Flood Design Criteria.

City of Lincoln Design Standards 2.05 Stormwater Drainage Design Standards

Minimum Corridor: Minimum flood corridor shall mean the existing channel bottom width plus 60 feet plus six times the channel depth and the corridor will be centered on the channel, as shown in Figure 1 or aligned such that the corridor follows the natural flow of flood waters. (Added 5-10-04; Resolution No. A-82748)

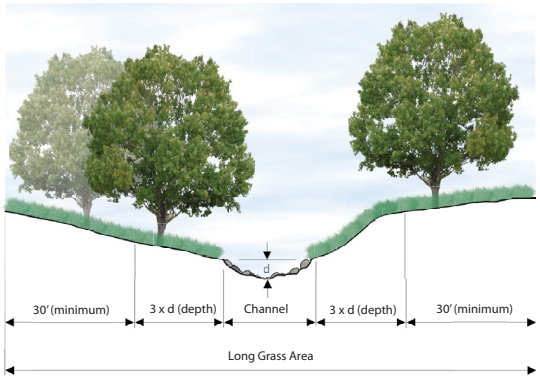
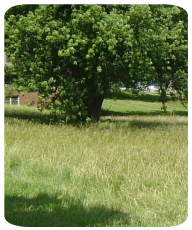



Figure 1: Minimum Flood Corridor