

From: Paul Noeldner <paul_noeldner@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 11:28 AM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Natural Areas Ordinance

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Parks Commission Members -

Please co-sponsor the following ordinance to help save our urban natural areas and put it up for adoption by the Parks Commission, Sustainability Committee, Habitat Committee, and full Council. A copy is also attached.

We say a lot of nice things in resolutions about supporting Monarchs and Nature Everywhere. This ordinance with your support will give high level authority to Parks and Engineering management to consistently define natural areas and management and usage guidelines.

It is supported by a number of northside and east side groups including Wild Warner, Friends of Cherokee Marsh, and Friends of Starkweather Creek.

I am registered to speak and will introduce it in honor of Earth Week at the Wednesday March 13 6:30pm Parks Commission meeting. I will be happy to meet or discuss over the phone [608-698-0104](tel:608-698-0104).

Thank you so much for all you do.

NATURAL AREAS ORDINANCE

"Madison Parks and Engineering Greenways Natural Areas Ordinance"

WHEREAS

Urban Natural Areas in Madison Parks and Engineering Greenways offer numerous social, health and economic benefits to the general Madison public and to the health and sustainability of our shared natural world

THEREFORE

1. All areas and borders in Madison Parks and Engineering Greenways that are not frequently mowed or managed for special purposes shall be mapped and designated as Madison Parks and Greenways Natural Areas.
2. Madison Parks and Greenways Natural Areas shall be managed and utilized with a long term priority to help preserve and restore native Wisconsin trees, plants, pollinators, birds and wildlife biodiversity and to provide year round opportunities for eco-friendly public access activities and enjoyment and the daily and long term health and economic benefits of nearby nature for citizens in every Madison neighborhood.
3. Public support for creating, preserving and sustaining urban natural areas, borders and corridors in yards, campuses and businesses shall be encouraged through education, planning and available financial incentives to help connect and enhance these shared values for the City of Madison as a whole.

PURPOSE

Madison recently adopted the National Wildlife Federation Mayors Monarch Pledge as follows: "We consider ourselves leaders in enhancing our use of public green space to include not just recreation or utilitarian function, but also wildlife habitat and refuge". Madison is also hosting the 2024 national Nature Everywhere conference.

This ordinance will help Madison officially accomplish these worthy stated goals and help avoid seeing our urban natural areas chipped away one project and parcel at a time.

This ordinance prioritizes saving remaining unmowed areas and borders in city parks and greenways and restoring them over time to native habitat and helps provide consistency in long term parks and greenways natural areas preservation, planning and management to benefit the city and our urban natural ecosystems as a whole.

BENEFITS

The Madison Parks and Greenways Natural Areas Ordinance will help meet important City of Madison goals.

- * Madison's support for Nature Everywhere
- * Madison's support for the Monarch Pledge
- * Sequestering Carbon in Natural Areas
- * Mitigating Climate Change Impacts
- * Filtering and Cleaning our Water
- * Reducing Flooding
- * Saving Pollinators
- * Offering Welcoming Green Landscapes
- * Preserving Urban Cooling Tree Canopy
- * Enhancing Enjoyment of Outdoor Time
- * Accessibility of Outdoor Nature Exercise
- * Mental Health Benefits of Time in Nature
- * Creating Viewscapes of Natural Areas
- * Supporting Healthy Child Development
- * Creating Opportunities for Nature Play
- * Civic Importance of Free Shared Spaces
- * Nature Education near Every School
- * Nature Recreation for All Ages and Abilities
- * Nearby Citizen Science Helping Researchers
- * Nature Restoration Volunteer Opportunities
- * A Sense of Place and Neighborhood Identity
- * Community Connections and Social Bonding
- * Assuring Equitable Access to Nearby Nature
- * Serving a Diverse and Growing Population
- * Increasing Surrounding Property Values
- * Lowering City Carbon Consumption and Cost
- * Enabling Consistent Natural Area Planning

- * Creating Consistent Management Guidelines
- * Preserving Critical Urban Nature Ecosystems
- * Connecting Nature Corridors of All Sizes
- * Supporting Sustainable Resilient Biodiversity
- * And Preserving Urban Natural Areas Full of Beauty and Life in All Madison Neighborhoods

Paul Noeldner

Volunteer Madison FUN Coordinator

Wisconsin Master Naturalist Instructor

136 Kensington Maple Bluff

paul_noeldner@hotmail.com

[608 698 0104](tel:6086980104)

Public Ethics, Facts and Fairness Trump Personal, Family and Religious Values and Profits in Public Decisions in Democratic Government, Laws and Institutions in a Free Civil Society. Simply put being civil is just like sports. Fair rules mean everybody can play hard and cheer for our team, but not keep some people out of the game, skip paying our fair share, wreck the playing field, or cheat to win.

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- * And Preserving Urban Natural Areas Full of Beauty and Life in All Madison Neighborhoods

From: Paul Noeldner <paul_noeldner@hotmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 1:13 PM

To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>; All Alders <allalders@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: The Natural Areas Ordinance is needed

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

The Natural Areas Ordinance sent to you in an earlier email is not an exclusive mandate, and we do need it.

It adds needed official city wide support for good things already being done by Parks and Engineering on a case by case basis.

This ordinance establishes a strong and consistent city wide priority to designate our remaining unmowed areas as Natural Areas and preserve opportunities for Parks and Engineering to restore degraded areas to native habitat over time, while still allowing for other needs that are specifically justified on a case by case basis.

This is flexible. Other needs can still be proposed and implemented, but they can and should require some extra justification.

Currently it is far too easy to simply write off unmowed areas because they are seen as unused, free, poor quality or already degraded.

The problem with that current approach is that it is a self-fulfilling downward spiral resulting in parcel by parcel loss or repurposing of our remaining 'low quality' urban natural areas, as we continue to see.

We can only cut things in half so many times before losing them and extirpating wildlife biodiversity in already challenged urban ecosystems.

Even poor quality large and small unmowed areas and borders are important as our remaining ecological biodiversity refugia and they provide critical corridor connections when areas around them are developed with mowed turf and concrete or private properties with a wildlife gauntlet of pesticides and other risks.

Every small piece matters in a time of climate change and ecological degradation. We cannot afford to see our remaining urban natural areas continue to shrink and be repurposed. We need to take this seriously and give it official priority not just to make another well intended but easy to ignore resolution.

We need to set the bar a little higher and more consistently across all projects and parcels as we continue to look at and individually argue the merits of other proposed uses case by case with public input as it should be.

In real terms this Natural Areas Ordinance a priority and consistency will help encourage or require more consideration of alternative locations for proposed facilities and active sports such as making more multipurpose use of already mowed but underutilized turf grass areas, and more use of abandoned and previously developed but underutilized paved areas. To put it succinctly, unmowed areas should not be considered the default or free alternative.

Please help support adoption of this Natural Areas Ordinance to bring an official higher priority to preserving our remaining urban natural habitat areas and restoration opportunities, while continuing to accommodate other needs and priorities on a case by case basis where justified.

Paul Noeldner
Volunteer Madison FUN Coordinator
Wisconsin Master Naturalist Instructor
136 Kensington Maple Bluff
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[608 698 0104](tel:6086980104)

From: Paul Noeldner <paul_noeldner@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:28 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>; All Alders <allalders@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: RE: The Natural Areas Ordinance is needed - copy attached

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

A copy of the Natural Areas Ordinance is attached for reference with the email below.

Please co-sponsor and support it, thank you.

Some might say we are already doing these things on a case by case basis, or that it is too much of a mandate.

The Natural Areas Ordinance attached is not an exclusive mandate, and we do need it.

It adds needed official city wide support for good things already being done by Parks and Engineering on a case by case basis.

This ordinance establishes a strong and consistent city wide priority to designate our remaining unmowed areas as Natural Areas and preserve opportunities for Parks and Engineering to restore degraded areas to native habitat over time, while still allowing for other needs that are specifically justified on a case by case basis.

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It simply establishes a stronger priority to save remaining unmowed areas and manage them to create or restore native habitat over time while still allowing for other needs that are specifically justified on a case by case basis. This is flexible. Other needs can still be proposed and implemented, but they can and should require some extra justification.

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In real terms this ordinance priority will help require more consideration of alternative locations for proposed facilities and active sports such as using or making multipurpose use of already mowed but underutilized turf areas and use of abandoned and previously developed but underutilized paved areas. To put it succinctly, unmowed areas should not be considered the default or free alternative.

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