

8.03 TREE PRESERVATION POLICY

Purpose & Statement of Value

The purpose of the tree preservation policy is to protect and preserve the urban forest on property owned or operated by the Freeport Park District in order to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. The Freeport Park District recognizes that trees are essential components of parks and should receive the same care as other critical infrastructure.

Definitions

The following definitions only apply to the Tree Preservation Policy and have no binding effect on any other policy of the Freeport Park District.

ARBORIST: Any individual experienced in the profession of forestry or a related field and is licensed or certified in forestry by an accredited forestry industry body, e.g. International Society of Arboriculture.

CONSTRUCTION: Any proposed change in the use or character of land, including, but not limited to the replacement of any structure or site improvements, e.g. irrigation installation, driveway replacement, installation of a retaining wall among others.

CONTRACTOR: A company or individual contracted to perform tree services.

DESTRUCTION: Impact or loss of function to any tree including but not limited to: removal, root compaction, root removal, girdling, soil contamination, topping, pruning more than 20% of the trees, canopy removal, bark removal, poisoning and or/ actions resulting in the decline or death of a tree.

INFRASTRUCTURE: The basic underlying framework or features that provide collective services, including but not limited to roads, waterlines, storm sewers, bioswales, and trees.

INVASIVE SPECIES: An introduced or exotic species that significantly modifies or disrupts the ecosystem in which it colonizes (e.g. buckthorn).

MANAGEMENT PLAN: A plan approved by the Freeport Park District outlining the strategies for care and management of a specific type of landscape.

TREE: Any self-supporting woody plant, together with its root system, trunk and canopy; growing upon the earth usually with one trunk, or a multi-stemmed trunk system, supporting a definitely formed crown.

TREE REMOVAL: The cutting down, destruction, removal or relocation of any tree, including damaging by poison or other direct or indirect action.

URBAN FOREST: A collection of trees that grow within a city, town or suburb. In a wider sense, it would include any kind tree that is planted and inventoried in the Freeport Park District. As opposed to a forest, whose ecosystems are inherited from natural growth and selection.

Tree preservation and protection applicability

Freeport Park District shall take all reasonable steps to preserve and protect trees on Park District property through active forest management. This includes:

- Employ a certified arborist on staff.
- Create and maintain a tree inventory.
- Develop a strategy for managing trees on Park District property.
- Utilize a strategy for tree diversity in each park location by limiting the ratio to no more than 10% to any one genus or 5% to any one species.
- Replace trees from our inventory of park trees that are lost to attrition, construction, or accident.

- Follow standard tree planting, removal, replacement, and maintenance procedures as established in the American National Standards (ANSI) publications Z60.1 for planting and A300 for established tree management.
- Monitor trees for risk and mitigate potential hazards in a timely manner.
- Protect trees during construction by establishing a temporary barrier using brightly colored construction fencing at the tree's drip line to keep construction activity and equipment away from the root zone.
- Selection for tree replacements shall exclude any tree species identified by the USDA National Invasive Species Information Center as invasive.
- Tree planting shall only occur within the appropriate season.
- New trees will receive additional care during their first year of establishment.
- Identify and take reasonable steps to cure, isolate or remove trees infected with serious environmental issues.
- Use technical specifications when hiring contractors that ensure work will be done in compliance with ANSI A300, Z60.1, and Z133.
- Hiring preferences will be given to arborists that are certified through the International Society of Arboriculture whenever possible.

Tree Planting, Removal, and Pruning

Tree care within the Freeport Park District shall comply with all Best Management Practices. As the sole property owner of all Park District-owned land in Freeport, Freeport Park District shall have sole discretion as to trees to be planted, maintained, or removed on its property. The district shall be responsible for holding its contractors and vendors to its internal standards. The Superintendent of Parks and Natural Resources shall approve tree removals only when other mitigation options are unavailable or unacceptable.

Authority

The Superintendent of Parks and Natural Resources under the direction of the Executive Director of the Freeport Park District and the governance of the Board of Commissioners shall be responsible for making decisions about trees including the development and implementation of any management plans under the Tree Preservation Policy.

Permits, penalties & enforcement

The Freeport Park District is committed to protecting its natural resources through adoption and enforcement of its General Use Regulations. Chapter II, Section 2 of the General Use Regulations states:

SECTION 2: DESTRUCTION OR MISUSE OF NATURAL RESOURCES:

No person shall upon, or in connection with, any property of the District:

- Cut, remove, uproot, or wantonly destroy any tree, sapling, seedling, bush, shrub, flower, or plant, whether alive or dead; or chip, blaze, box, girdle, trim or otherwise deface or injure any tree, shrub, or bush; break or remove any branch or foliage thereof; or pick or gather any seed of any tree or other plant without the written permission of the Director; (Class C)
- Remove or cause to be removed any sod, earth, humus, downed timber, wood, chips, peat, rock, sand, or gravel; or remove or cause to be removed any other natural material of the forest floor or earth without written permission of the Director; (Class C)

All fine, penalties and civil remedies within the General Use Regulations are set forth by Ordinance by the Freeport Park District Board of Commissioners.