

# **PARKS POLICY**

## **Introduction**

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The Community Association of Hollin Hills (CAHH) has delegated the care and maintenance of the seven parks owned by the CAHH to the Hollin Hills Parks Committee. These seven parks are: the Wildlife Sanctuary, Sutton Potter Park, Brickelmaier Park, Charles Goodman Park, Paul Spring Park, Voigt Memorial Park, and "Mac" McCalley Park.

The Hollin Hills Parks Committee is comprised of a chair and one or more wardens for each park. Requirements for membership on the committee are that a resident be a member in good standing of CAHH and be willing to contribute time. The committee meets periodically to review issues relating to policy and maintenance, and to determine appropriate interventions where necessary.

Another responsibility of the Parks Committee is to stay informed about environmental issues affecting the health of urban forests and to share this information with the community through articles in the Hollin Hills Bulletin.

While the Parks Committee is responsible for the oversight of the parks, community support and participation is necessary if the parks are to remain an important and viable community asset. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the community to support a variety of smaller tasks being undertaken in the parks and, most importantly, to participate in general cleanups as regularly announced in the Bulletin.

Major projects, such as the removal of trees and the cutting of grassy areas, will be contracted out. Hired workmen and volunteers will undertake other long-term projects, such as removal of invasive species and the rehabilitation of streambeds. The chair and/or the wardens shall oversee all work done in the parks.

Funds for the upkeep of the parks come from CAHH membership dues and individual contributions. The Parks Committee recommends an annual budget to the CAHH. If approved, the budget request becomes part of the CAHH budget. Expenditures for upkeep of the parks will be approved either by the parks chair or by consensus of the parks committee.

## **The Value of the Parks**

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The parks are a defining feature of Hollin Hills. They significantly enhance life in the community by providing cooling shade, sound absorption, and an aesthetic backdrop for homes. Away from the tumult of modern life, the parks offer respite and quiet recreation for strolling, hiking, and meditating.

As part of the community's eco-system, these largely forested areas are important as wildlife habitats, and provide a wealth of material for nature study. Nesting species of birds not typically found in urban or suburban neighborhoods thrive here, such as the

barred owl, the red-tailed hawk, wood ducks, and several species of woodpeckers, including the pileated woodpecker. Migratory birds, including the scarlet tanager, Swainson's thrush, and several species of warblers, rest in the parks and fatten up before their long journey north in spring and south in the autumn.

Other species find shelter here too, including white-tailed deer, wild rabbits, red and gray fox, possum, raccoons, skunks, chipmunk, shrew, squirrel, and a variety of butterflies, insects, turtles, frogs, and fish.

Much of this shelter is provided by the native trees populating the forest: yellow poplar, pin oak, willow oak, sweet gum, red maple, American beech, white oak, black oak, black gum, sycamore, Virginia pine, and red cedar. Other existing plant species provide both shelter and foodstuff.

At one time, many wild flowers delighted the casual observer and the serious student. Flowers such as marsh marigold, cowslip, mayapple, milkweed, toothwort, bellwort, false solomon's seal and asters once were abundant in the parks. However, the number has been severely reduced by the unchecked spread of invasive and exotic plant species.

## **The Policy**

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The overriding theme of the CAHH Parks Policy is one of stewardship. The policy is aimed at preserving and enhancing the value of the parks as a green setting, contributing to human health and enjoyment, and conserving wildlife habitats and native plants.

The following shall be the policy for stewardship of the parks:

### **Safeguarding Human Health and Property**

- Standing water shall be controlled to the greatest extent possible in order to control breeding of mosquitoes. Dead trees or branches that threaten or endanger established pathways, roads, or properties will be removed.
- Excessive undergrowth, insofar as it poses a fire hazard, inhibits the flow of water to our streams (creating mosquito breeding pools,) or serves as habitat for deer ticks, shall be controlled to the greatest extent possible.
- Maintaining the health of the trees
- and plants within the parks.
- Periodic surveys of the parks shall be undertaken to determine the health of the plant life in our parks. As part of these surveys, the extent of incursion and damage by invasive species and exotic plants will be determined, and steps will be taken as practicable to eliminate the invasive non-native species.
- Strict conservation guidelines for the elimination of invasive species and other solutions concerning undermined, diseased, or dead trees shall be followed. In case of extensive removal, adjacent homeowners will be given prior notice.

### **Overseeing Drainage and Water Quality**

- Issues of drainage and water quality will be monitored and addressed.
- Serious erosion problems will be addressed.
- Impediments (such as significant detritus, both inorganic and organic) to stream flow or improper drainage of water from adjacent properties into the streams of the parks will be addressed and eliminated where feasible.

### **Enforcement of Park Rules and General Maintenance**

- New plantings in the parks shall be approved by the Parks Committee and shall include indigenous and non-invasive species only.
- General maintenance shall include removal of invasive species where necessary, replanting of native plants, mowing of grassy areas, and periodic mulching of pathways, as well as creating and maintaining an aesthetically-pleasing entry to the community at the corners of Fort Hunt and Paul Spring Roads, and Davenport Road.
- Property owners who plant invasive species near the boundaries of the parks shall be responsible for preventing the spread of the plants into the parks. The planting of invasive species by homeowners is strongly discouraged because of the difficulty in preventing the spread of these species into the parks.
- Property owners shall not dump leaves and/or other debris within park boundaries, including streams.
- Bicycle riding or use of motorized vehicles in the parks and along footpaths shall be prohibited.
- Park boundaries will be maintained and appropriate actions will be taken to deal with any encroachments into the parks.