

Corporate Policy

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Section:	Planning and Development	13
Sub-Section:	Sustainability Services	6870
Title:	Naturescape Principles	2019-01

Related Policies

Number	Title
13-6870-2019-02	Bird Nest Protection

Approvals

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Naturescape Principles

Policy

It is the policy of the City that Naturescape Principles be followed on City lands and private property in and bordering Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA).

It is the policy of the City that civic projects on City lands follow the Naturescape Principles outlined in this document, where appropriate.

It is the policy of the City that development activities on private property be encouraged to follow Naturescape Principles, wherever appropriate.

It is the policy of the City to support the implementation of Naturescape Principles by residents.

Definitions

Naturescape British Columbia¹ was a program sponsored by the provincial and federal governments and non-profit organizations that focused on restoring, maintaining, preserving, and enhancing wildlife habitat in urban and rural landscapes. Although the program was designed to encourage private citizens to provide wildlife habitat (food, water, and shelter) in their own backyards, the principles were readily extended at the municipal level. A key component of the program was to promote the use of native plant species in landscaping – providing more biodiverse habitat for wildlife, increasing habitat connectivity within an urbanized environment, and creating an attractive, low-maintenance landscape.

The City of Port Moody adopted the principles of Naturescape BC as a Corporate Policy in 1997. These principles were then incorporated into the City's Official Community Plan and Development Permit Guidelines, and led to the adoption of other supportive bylaws (i.e., Zoning Bylaw provisions, Pesticide Use Control Bylaw), policies (i.e., Tree Management Policy, Bird Nest Protection Policy), and programs (i.e., ESA Management Strategy, invasive plant management).

Procedures

This Policy should be implemented in accordance with the following principles:

Protection, Enhancement, and Connectivity

Protecting, enhancing, and improving connectivity of existing habitat shall be achieved through the implementation of the following principles, where appropriate:

- existing native trees, dominant plants, natural habitat features, and Environmentally Sensitive Areas will seek to be retained, and undisturbed areas will be protected wherever possible;

¹ Note that the Naturescape BC program has since been embedded in other provincial and regional programs and guidelines.

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- specialized habitat elements will be retained and incorporated into parks and natural spaces where feasible, including bird and bat boxes, herptile rock piles, and wildlife brush piles. Natural spaces that can be designated and managed as specialized habitat areas such as pollinator-friendly and grass meadows will be identified;
- the City will work to actively prevent and control infestations of invasive species on City lands. Efforts will strategically target high-risk invasive species, most sensitive habitats, and potential human health and safety risks. Efforts by residents to control invasive plants on private property will be encouraged and supported wherever possible;
- all tree and brush removal work will be done in accordance with the City's Bird Nest Protection Policy. The timing of tree removal, brush and trail clearing, and mowing should also consider flowering plants and best management practices to minimize disturbance;
- work related to tree protection and management on City land will follow the City's Tree Management Policy, which includes principles of habitat protection that align with the Naturescape Policy. This includes the preservation of existing tree cover, prioritizing mature trees, wherever possible, the protection and creation of wildlife trees and stumps and the re-use of tree material. Where feasible, safe, and appropriate, staff will leave brush piles and vegetative litter on site for natural decay and to provide wildlife habitat refuge areas;
- the City will actively plan for the replacement of large, healthy specimen trees over the long term. For replacement and new trees, species selection will balance the principles of Naturescape with other needs and constraints for urban forests and street trees (e.g., space restrictions, maintenance needs, climate change adaptation, etc.);
- trail maintenance will follow best management practices to minimize disturbance while ensuring safe access and use of the trail network. Special care will be given around ecologically significant areas; and
- trail networks will seek to minimize habitat fragmentation and maximize habitat connectivity while considering wildlife and bear-safe standards. Decommissioning of old trails or trails in sensitive areas will be considered to reduce impacts.

Landscaping

Native plants incorporated into landscaping plans provide food and shelter for wildlife and once established, require minimal maintenance. The design and maintenance of landscaping plans shall incorporate the following principles, where appropriate:

- native plants will be chosen on the basis of their suitability for the site and the desire to create a functional and visually attractive landscape that provides shelter and a continual source of food for wildlife throughout the seasons. Native plant species should be chosen from up-to-date resources available for the region, and should be sourced from nursery propagated stock or salvaged wild native flora;
- ecologically appropriate plantings will take into consideration site-specific conditions (e.g., soil, shade, topography, moisture, elevation, etc.), as well as adaptability and resilience (e.g., drought and salt tolerance, climate change, human and pet access, herbivory);

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- the diversity of plants will be maximized to reflect natural conditions, including a mixture of species and sizes, evergreen and deciduous, young and mature stock. Existing on-site native plants can be used as indicator species. A biodiverse selection of plants will have greater benefits for wildlife than a site planted with only a limited number of species;
- landscaping plans will prioritize connectivity across sites and habitats. Buffers of dense vegetation will be incorporated between undisturbed wildlife areas and busy locations;
- native plants that provide year-round food for wildlife in the form of nectar, seeds, berries, and insects shall be used when appropriate. Use of native plants that may attract bears will be avoided and discouraged in areas identified as higher risk for human-bear conflict, as directed; and
- natural means of fertilizing, weed, and predator control will be prioritized over synthetic chemicals. All works will be in accordance with the City's Pesticide Use Control Bylaw.

Education and Outreach

Public education on the value of Naturescape is critical to the success of this policy. The following principles shall be followed to encourage adoption of this policy:

- the City will develop, maintain, and distribute a preferred plant list that will include recommendations for landscaping near bear habitat;
- relevant City staff shall be provided with regular training and up-to-date resources on the Naturescape Policy, associated procedures, and best practices. An inventory of ecologically significant assets and areas on City lands will be maintained and shared with relevant staff as part of training;
- the City will provide opportunities for public education to encourage adoption of Naturescape principles on private property, including resources on the City website, development of information factsheets for developers and new residents, reminders and information on pesticide use restrictions, and relevant public workshops and information sessions. Involving schools in hands-on activities will help foster a greater understanding of Naturescape principles; and
- the City will develop best management practices and guidelines as needed to ensure successful implementation of the Naturescape Policy on City lands.

Monitoring/Authority

This policy is to be administered and monitored by the General Manager of Environment and Parks, the General Manager of Planning and Development, and the General Manager of Engineering and Operations.

Additional Standards and Best Practices²

The following standards and best practices should be implemented in conjunction with the Naturescape Policy, Bird Nest Protection Policy, Tree Management Policy, Tree Protection Bylaw, Vector Control Bylaw, and Development Permit Guidelines, where appropriate:

Naturescape BC Georgia Basin Native Plant and Animal Guide. Information on wildlife-friendly plants and their requirements in the Georgia Basin. Available online:

<https://hctfeducation.ca/product/naturescape-georgia-basin-native-plant-animal-guide-pdf/>

Riparian Revegetation. Provides guidance on revegetating riparian habitats. Note that some of the information provided in this document can be used for areas outside of riparian habitats (e.g. planting criteria, ground seeding), including all Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Available online: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/315523.pdf>

RAR Revegetation Guidelines for Brownfield Sites. Guidelines for revegetation planning and monitoring in Riparian Areas. Available online:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/fish-fish-habitat/riparian-areas-regulations/rar_reveg_guidebk_sept6_2012_final.pdf

Develop with Care 2014 – Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia. This document provides comprehensive guidelines to maintain and improve environmental values and provides alternatives to standard development and landscaping practices. Available online: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/laws-policies-standards-guidance/best-management-practices/develop-with-care>

City of Coquitlam Guidelines for Landscaping Near Sensitive Bear Habitat – Provides guidance on how to keep neighbourhoods safe using landscaping practices that do not attract bears.

Available online: <https://www.coquitlam.ca/docs/default-source/city-services-documents/landscaping-in-bear-habitat.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

City of Vancouver Bird Friendly Landscape Operational Guidelines. Provides guidance on landscaping designs to promote bird habitats. Available online:

<https://council.vancouver.ca/20150120/documents/rr1attachmentC.pdf>

Vancouver Bird Strategy, Appendix B – Bird Friendly Design Guidelines. This document provides landscape and building design guidelines that reduce bird-window collision risks.

Available online: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/vancouver-bird-strategy.pdf>

² Information provided for reference purposes only. Up-to-date resources should be used whenever available.

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Urban Forest Climate Adaptation Framework for Metro Vancouver. This document provides a thorough species section framework that ensures resilience and diversity for urban trees, soil and planting infrastructure requirements to ensure planting success, and climate adaptation strategies for water management. Available online:

<http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/UrbanForestClimateAdaptationFrameworkTreeSpeciesSelection.pdf>

Design Guidebook – Maximizing Climate Adaptation Benefits with Trees. Provides species recommendations based on site considerations. Available online:

<http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/DesignGuidebookMaximizingClimateAdaptation.pdf>

Chines Integrated Stormwater Management Plan. This document provides best management strategies around growing median depths for lawns, trees, and shrubs to assist with stormwater management. Available online: http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/Utilities/UC-Nov_10_2016-Item_5.9_Ref.pdf

Canadian Landscape Standards. Guidelines for landscape construction projects to ensure all project work meets nationally recognized standards. Available for purchase: <http://www.csla-aapc.ca/standard>